GUARDIAN WEEKLY
February 23 1997

Rugby Union Five Nations Championship: Ireland 6 England 46

Grayson sets England record straight

Robert Armstrong

PAUL GRAYSON, orchestrator-in-chief of England's biggest Five Nations win ever, hammered out a timely warning to all comers on Saturday that he intends to make the No 10 shirt his own up to and beyond the 1999 World Cup.

The Northampton player, dismissed not so long ago as a one-paced plodder whose only virtue was kicking goals, proved as lethal a scourge of the Irish as he was of the Scots, regaling Lansdowne Road with an assured performance that promises him a long international future.

It was Grayson's rock-like consistency under pressure and his cool, unfussy distribution in attack that ultimately nudged England into a six-try win that left Ireland contemplating the melancholy wreckage of yet another false dawn. The wings Tony Underwood and Jon Sleightholme, who scored two tries apiece, will appreciate better than anyone the debt owed to Grayson, whom Jack Rowell last month recalled from the wilderness.

The 25-year-old Grayson, who lost his place to Mike Catt for three pre-Christmas matches, has brought so much control to the England engine room that the newly empowered backs have cut loose and rattled up 10 tries in their last two games. England's aggregate of 87 points is by some distance the most crushing demonstration of firepower seen in the championship.



England's Tony Underwood proves untouchable to Ireland's Denis Hickie PHOTO: BRENDAN MORAN

"You have to get yourself into positions from which you can strike and in the final quarter we did just that," said the captain Phil de Glanville after his side had scored 29 points in the last 16 minutes.

"Paul Grayson had an excellent game, particularly during the tricky period when the Irish were pushing us back with well-constructed passages of play."

Even Rowell's late tactical substitutions worked a treat, enabling England to turn a rampant display into a complete rout. Guscott, who replaced Carling in the 76th minute, gave the scoring pass for both the Underwood tries; Healey, the Leicester scrum-half who took over from the splendid Gomarsall in the 74th, celebrated his first cap with a slick transfer under pressure to Hill who scored on the left.

No doubt England's forwards will receive the same provocation from the French at Twickenham on March 1 as they did from the Irish in the early stages, and Johnson (stamping), Rodber (punching) and Rowntree (sundry acts of mayhem) will need to curb their rough-house tactics if they hope to stay on the pitch for 80 minutes next time around.

Still, any suspicion that the England pack may have lacked the ruthless edge of its predecessors was swiftly dispelled as Leonard, Hill, Dallaglio and Rodber met fire with fire in a mostly legitimate style.

However, the inability of the Irish pack to impose a pattern of control meant that the well-laid plans of their coach Brian Ashton to put one over his old Bath confrère Rowell rarely had a chance.

"We were disrupted by injuries, particularly the one to our No 8 Eric Miller," said Ashton later, referring to the forward who was carried off in the 12th minute, "and perhaps we were a little naïve."

Ireland, trailing by only 11-6 at half-time, were most inventive in the third quarter when the centre Field, one of their few individual successes, and the wings Hickie and Topping made threatening runs into the England box.

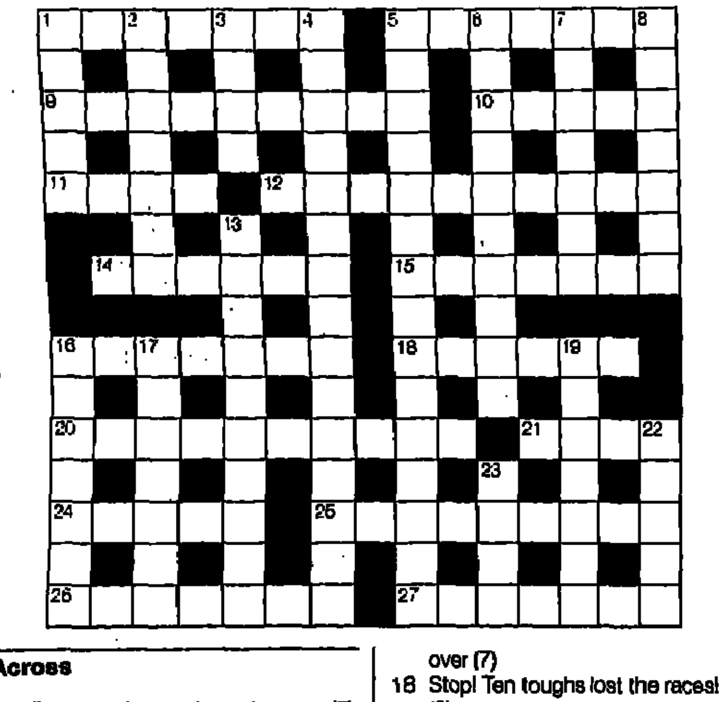
But the indefatigable Grayson steadily eroded Irish morale with two important penalty goals from more than 30 metres and, to show he could also kick out of hand, drove Ireland back with four booming touchfinders that earned glances of gratitude from his forwards. After one prodigious relieving kick from 22 to 22, Irish heads visibly began to droop.

Sleightholme's well-worked first-half try was simply a foretaste of the damage England went on to inflict in the traumatic closing stages. Gomarsall cantered through unhindered from the base of a five-yard scrum. Dallaglio sent Sleightholme racing away for his second try and Hill and Underwood (twice) turned the screw with enthusiastic precision.

Five Nations Table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
England	2	2	0	0	87	19	4
France	2	2	0	0	59	37	4
Wales	3	1	0	2	81	72	2
Ireland	3	1	0	2	47	103	2
Scotland	2	0	0	2	32	75	0

Cryptic crossword by Plodge



Across

1 For part of speech, saying: . . . (7)
5 . . . "First rehearsal, please! Cast to fall back . . . (7)
9 Into the arena and Roman pitcher may be going home" (9)
10 Told to take a good look at the high-riser (5)
11 Ham liquor could be pop (4)
12 Made round mince pasties, but wasted! (10)
14 The last of "Handel in the Strand" to go blonde? (6)
15 Read about quaint audio equipment (7)
16 Louis played, so match was over (7)
18 Stop! Ten toughs lost the races! (6)
20 Being neglectful of a 12 youngster (10)
21 What's the matter? The watchdogs are not having a row! (4)
24 Caught abandoned, having split (5)
25 Railcar reversed for paramilitaries' main consumer (9)
26 Being ordered to do a turn at the Albert Hall, perhaps . . . (7)
27 . . . may exert setter to the limit (7)

Down

1 Petrarch would not admit to drawing up to swimmer (6)
2 May describe an illusion of having a flutter in precious stone (7)
3 Lake rose for Joyce's address (4)
4 The Welsh are amongst those on the short list to be a 22-d part of Canada (7,8)
5 See 22
6 After 22, set up agents in teaching someone who may lack papers (4,6)
7 Smooth over one from the relief column (7)
8 Order a lord (me!) to a higher estate (7)
13 Remains in flight, not up to 22 (10)
16 Run Pluto up a cocktail (7)
17 Everyone in the trial is as high as can be! (7)
19 Inclusion of reading and writing in oddly vague printing process (7)
22 5 down initially, a siren that is lost . . . (5,10,5)
23 . . . and incapacitated? Humbug! (4)

Last week's solution

P	E	L	I	C	A	N		P	E	A	F	O	W	L
L		E		O		A		Y		V		B		A
A	L	G	U	M		M	O	R	T	I	C	I	A	N
I		U		M		E		O		D		T		D
C	U	M	B	E	R	S	O	M	E		P	U	L	L
E		E		N				A		B		A		O
				T	R	A	I	N	B	E	A	R	E	R
G		A		A		P		I		N		Y		D
I	N	C	A	R	C	E	R	A	T	E				
R		Q		Y		N				F		A		D
A	B	U	T		A	N	T	H	R	A	C	I	T	E
F		I		F		I		O		C		L		F
F	O	R	E	I	G	N	E	R		T	W	I	N	E
E		E		N		E		S		O		N		N
S	A	D	N	E	S	S		E	N	R	A	G	E	D

France 27 Wales 22

Wales go down fighting

Ian Malin

THE game was as upbeat and rousing as the band's rendering of La Marseillaise before the match. Wales maintained the tempo. The only jarring note was the score.

As Wales's director of rugby, Terry Cobner, said afterwards, it was one of their greatest performances in recent memory. Cobner does not need reminding that he was a member of the last Welsh side to win here 22 years ago but Wales are no longer dwelling on the past. Their old maestros Gareth Edwards, Phil Bennett and Barry John, among the spectators for Wales's final visit to the Parc, were entranced by another performance of verve and skill. Ten tries in three games is evidence that a pre-tournament promise of expansive rugby is being kept.

And yet: Wales, for all their boldness, will probably never have a better chance of winning in Paris. The French were as cavalier themselves as D'Artagnan and his chums. They ran the ball from everywhere but lost possession countless times up front and creaked at half-back. In the end only a cruel bounce that gave Laurent Leflamand his second try decided the match.

Wales, who had conceded a fluky try against Ireland, when Eric Elwood's garryowen rebounded off the padding on the posts, may feel Lady Luck is not a member of their squad in this Five Nations campaign.

On both occasions Neil Jenkins, converted to full-back by Wales, was the hapless victim. Jenkins, a solid performer and reliable place-kicker, should certainly not be made a scapegoat but his lack of pace does deprive Wales of an attacking option from full-back.

Whenever Jean-Luc Sadourny, Jenkins's opposite number on Saturday, fields the ball there is a buzz of expectation; when Jenkins, with Gareth Thomas outside him, had the chance of an incisive break down the left touch-line in the second half he chose to kick to the corner. It was an effective kick but an outside break would surely have produced a try.

There were plenty of heroes for Wales, though. Robert Howley's pace at scrum-half caused France countless problems, Mark Rowley had his most effective game in the red shirt in the line-out and Colin Charvis and Scott Quinnell were fast and effective in the loose.

But Wales's best player was Allan Bateman. Eighteen days after keyhole surgery to his knee the centre looked positively bionic. The French managed to bottle up his centre partner Scott Gibbs but Bateman made some searing breaks, one of which shredded the defence midway through the first half and indirectly led to Jenkins's only penalty.

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Jim Robinson (left), Vincent Hickey and Michael Hickey celebrate freedom after 18 years in jail

Bridgewater Three freed

Duncan Campbell and Kamal Ahmed

THEY came into the dock at the Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand, London, to be met by the sort of affectionate applause that greets a favourite actor arriving on stage in a familiar play.

The three who had stepped into Court Number Four as convicted murderers were about to leave it as free men. The Bridgewater Three — Jim Robinson, Vincent Hickey and Michael Hickey — were last week granted unconditional bail in anticipation of a successful appeal that the Crown will not contest. The 19-year drama in which four men were wrongly convicted for the murder of a 13-year-old newspaper boy, Carl Bridgewater, was almost over.

Also in court were representatives from the rolling confederacy of miscarriages of British justice — the Birmingham Six and the Tottenham Three — happy to see others now centre stage.

There was something hauntingly familiar about the eyes of a handsome young man with dark hair and a Nehru jacket listening patiently to the catalogue of malpractice spelled out by Michael Mansfield QC.

Mr Mansfield was representing the young man's father, Pat Molloy, the fourth defendant, who had died in prison in 1981 after being browbeaten into a confession, as the court was told, which he later retracted. For Nick Molloy, who had grown up with the shadow of his father's murder conviction, last week was also a moment of release.

The three Court of Appeal judges granted the men immediate and unconditional bail after they had heard crown counsel, Jeremy Roberts QC, accept that the case against them was "flawed".

As they left the court, Michael Hickey gave the judges a cheery, clenched-fist salute. The lunchtime traffic in the Strand was brought to a standstill as the crowds gathered to see the men. A hundred lenses pointed at the group as they smiled and waved. The media had been their ally and their enemy in their years inside. "You helped to convict us," said Jim Robinson at the press conference that followed, "and you helped to get us out."

The battle to overturn the convictions started with the whiff of doubt: worries about the confessions, the way evidence was collected, the reliability of the witnesses. It ended with an admission that the conviction of those four men was wrong.

The case against them relied essentially on one thing — the confession of Pat Molloy. It has now been confirmed to have been fabricated and offered to the jury all those years ago. Without it, the case was fatally flawed.

After Carl's death at Yew Tree Farm, in Staffordshire, police set up a huge inquiry. The first breakthrough came two months later. Two men with a shotgun had broken into Chapel Farm, a 30-minute drive from Yew Tree. Inside they found an 83-year-old retired farmer and his three sisters. After shouted threats, the men stole £300 and left.

Police traced the getaway car to the former girlfriend of Vincent Hickey, then aged 23 and well known to the police after a series of petty crimes. Hickey was brought in for questioning, and turned the spotlight on his young cousin, Michael Hickey.

Vincent implicated James Robinson and then named Molloy as taking part in the Yew Tree robbery. Molloy was arrested and, after questioning, apparently told police that he had been upstairs at the farm when the murder was committed. The others were downstairs.

Vincent Hickey and Robinson were sentenced to life with a recommendation they each serve 25 years. Michael Hickey was detained at Her Majesty's Pleasure because he was too young to be jailed for life, and Molloy was jailed for 12 years.

But evidence began to unravel. First, Vincent Hickey admitted he had told police anything to protect himself. Then the confession of Molloy was fundamentally undermined. He had been denied access to a lawyer for 10 days and, as soon as he saw one, withdrew his confession, which he said had been beaten out of him by officers from Staffordshire CID.

The first application for an appeal came in 1981. It relied on putting the name of Hubert Spencer, a local ambulance driver, in the frame. He had been an early suspect in the Bridgewater murder and had shot dead a farmer, Hubert Wilkes, a mile from Yew Tree Farm in 1979. But the judges were not convinced, and the appeal failed.

In 1987, the case was again referred to the Appeal Court after witnesses admitted lying, but the appeal was refused once more.

Then, in 1993, Dr Eric Shepherd, a forensic psychiatrist with a distinguished record in helping police with murder inquiries, studied Molloy's "confession" and concluded that it had been fabricated.

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China bids farewell to its last revolutionary

Andrew Higgins in Beijing and Agencies

PRESIDENT Jiang Zemin offered unstinted praise for Deng Xiaoping in his funeral oration on Tuesday, telling 10,000 of China's élite that the future lay with the profound economic reforms pioneered by the last of China's revolutionary leaders.

As final rites began for Deng, who died last week aged 92, sirens and whistles wailed nationwide for three minutes in deference to the man who delivered unprecedented prosperity to a nation of more than 1 billion people while keeping communists in charge.

In Beijing's Great Hall of the People, Mao-suited revolutionaries mingled with Western-suited technocrats to hear Mr Jiang — Deng's protégé and now China's most powerful man — sob theatrically at the start of an hour-long eulogy.

On the stage beneath a black-framed portrait of a smiling, avuncular Deng lay a casket containing his ashes, draped with a red hammer-and-sickle communist flag and surrounded by flowers and a wreath from his grief-stricken family.

But Mr Jiang glossed over what many see as Deng's darkest hour — his use of the army to crush pro-democracy protests centred on Tiananmen Square in 1989.

The government's authoritarian hand was in evidence in the vast square adjoining the Great Hall in Beijing on Tuesday. Police cleared the square soon after dawn, throwing a security net over an arena that is a potent symbol of China and a focus for expressions of grief as well as demonstrations of anger.

Mr Jiang seized upon the eulogy and emotional displays for the deceased patriarch to remind his opponents, and the 1.2 billion people over whom he now holds sway, that he is in charge, diplomats said.

On Monday, a modest minibus bedecked with ribbon delivered the body of Deng past throngs of shivering workers and bureaucrats — bused in to line Beijing's Avenue of Eternal peace but grateful for a day off work and a two-decade respite from revolutionary folly. The last journey of China's last all-powerful veteran of the 6,000-mile Long March covered barely two miles.

There were few tears for a man who allowed unimagined economic liberty but sent tanks into Tiananmen Square in 1989 to crush broader freedoms. The late paramount leader delivered goods, not dreams.

Thousands of police kept grief, the most politically dangerous of emotions in China, quarantined to a stretch of road between the People's Liberation Army general hospital, where Deng died, and the Babaoshan Revolutionary cemetery, where he was cremated in a brief private ceremony.

Deng's widow and five children were shown on state television wailing before a corpse covered to the neck with the red flag of the Communist party.

More than 100,000 people lined the street, according to the official Xinhua news agency. The actual figure seemed somewhat less.

Deng's family and the politburo he fashioned to lead the world's last remaining communist superpower lingered barely 20 minutes at the crematorium to bid farewell to a man whose life spanned almost an entire century, who survived — and often orchestrated — perpetual Communist party purges, and who transformed the lives of nearly a quarter of humankind.

The crowd outside waited in silence — very different from the students who, after the death of ousted party boss Hu Yaobang, strode raucously down the street to grieve in Tiananmen Square, with banners and bouquets of paper flowers, a traditional emblem of mourning.

Nor did Deng's mourners resemble the tearful, traumatised and monochrome mass that lined the Avenue of Eternal Peace in 1976 for Zhou Enlai and then Mao Zedong.

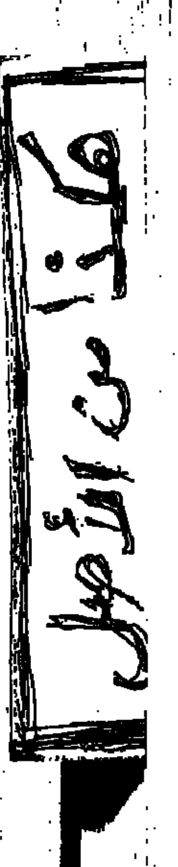
The mourners may have been spectators rather than participants, but they were still splashed with diverse colour and emotion. After the cremation many tied their paper flowers to trees and bushes at the side of the road.

China's era of revolution has ended with the death of Deng, the Long March veteran who dominated the world's most populous

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Austria	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 450	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3.30



Carla's Song: a simple and truthful testimony

DEREK MALCOLM in his review of Carla's Song (February 9) quite rightly states that the film gives us "evidence that is pretty indisputable" through which we learn "first-hand about the terrible history of Central America". He goes on to say, however, that its "analysis seems too weighted to be other than a little simplistic".

If the analysis is weighted and simplistic, so too was US involvement in internal Nicaraguan affairs during the 1980s. Weighted because the US government invested hundreds of millions, probably even thousands of millions, of dollars — legally and illegally — in military aid for the Contras and not a cent on the promotion of education, healthcare, land reform, social welfare, etc — so beautifully, simply and truthfully portrayed in Ken Loach's film as priorities for the Sandinista revolution.

Weighted because such "aid" led to the deaths of more than 50,000 mostly young Nicaraguans, leaving thousands of others, men, women and children, maimed, disfigured and disabled through the use of torture methods such as those inflicted upon Antonio, Carla's *compañero*.

For those of us who lived through the Contra war in the 1980s, the historical and emotional accuracy of the horrendous events portrayed in the second half of Carla's Song are a truthful testimony to the murderous policies pursued by the US government, allied to the Somocistas, in Nicaragua in the 1980s.

Ken Loach, Paul Laverty and their team portray not only the truth of the imbalances, the injustices and the war crimes perpetrated by the US government in Nicaragua during the 1980s but also of the united efforts of people to create a new society based upon the principles of justice, solidarity, the right to life and human dignity.

The truth in Nicaragua is simple: the rich continue to exploit the poor by all means necessary to maximise their profits and to maintain the balance of power in their favour. To speak the truth is to try and readdress that balance, keeping alive the collective, historical memory of the past and of what really happened. Sadly, to do so these days in Nicaragua is becoming more and more dangerous. In this neoliberal nightmare the odds are heavily weighed against those who dare to dream and speak and live and breath the truth.
Paddy Welsh,
Managua, Nicaragua

Hooray for zero tolerance

AS ONE who perceives himself a beneficiary of former Police Commissioner William Bratton's "zero tolerance" policy, I offer an alternative assessment to Rod Morgan (Swept away on a tide of zero tolerance, February 16). By ordering police to arrest what are called "turnstile jumpers" in the 450-mile-plus subway system in New York, Commissioner Bratton believed — rightly, as it turns out — that many of these fare evaders would often prove: 1) to be carrying illegal handguns; and 2) to have criminal warrants out for their arrests.

In addition, to the millions of fare-paying customers on the transit system, turnstile jumpers are both obnoxious and insulting in that they are seen to be thumbing their collective noses at the law.

Nowadays, when transit police officers — often in disguise — pop out from subway cars or vantage points and "collar" these (often young) men or women, a collective sigh of satisfaction can be heard by those nearby who have paid their $1.50 to be legally within the system.

Finally, when the police search an arrested person and find a handgun, or return the "perp" to the nearest precinct house and through the criminal justice computer find outstanding warrants which they can then fulfil, I think both they and we, as citizens, feel zero tolerance is a good thing.
Peter Winterble,
New York, USA

I AGREE with Rod Morgan that a zero tolerance policing policy is not the answer for effective policing. But he has not presented a well-rounded critique of New York's policing strategies over the past few years. I am no academic expert on the issues, but I did grow up and have lived many of my adult years in New York City, and all my friends and family believe that New York has become a safer place because of a combination of zero tolerance and community policing (and, of course, several other factors).

Morgan does not mention the presence of community policing programmes and how they have made a big difference. Instead, he focuses on the aggressiveness of New York police as a result of zero tolerance. It really makes me mad that people portray New York, even now when there is a positive story that crime is going down, in a negative light.

While I agree that the majority of people treated in this way are the disadvantaged and that this could translate into police aggression, in the affluent areas where people have for years double-parked their cars for a few hours while the street cleaners clean one side of the street, I haven't met one person who hasn't got a $55 ticket for double parking. Zero tolerance.

Let's be fair to New York and New Yorkers, and especially to some hard-working New York cops. Something right is happening.
Karen Brody,
Nairobi, Kenya

Britain low on brain power

THE latest UK government report about the oversupply of students in higher education (Many graduates make light work, February 16) should come as no surprise. Once again it has confirmed Britain's place in the global economy: a low-skilled, low-paid, superflexible sweatshop that has been constructed by successive Conservative governments since 1979.

International capital flows to Britain not because it has a large pool of highly educated, highly skilled, technically competent workers who will take Britain to the cutting edge of manufacturing in the 21st century. South Korean and Taiwanese capital comes to Britain to take advantage of no minimum wage, no Social Chapter, and the existence of a government which will do all in its power to keep the shopfloor in a constant state of uncertainty and docility.

Why would they want graduates? The subtext of the report is clear. It is not more graduates who are needed for today's Britain (unless it's in accountancy, criminal law or marketing) but rather a workforce with low self-esteem, minimum education, no personal ambition and which can respond quickly to the demands of international capital flows.
Robert Hassan,
Melbourne, Australia

FACED with evidence that university education is not optimally adjusted to the current job market the Government has come up with a predictably short-sighted and destructive solution (Britain to squeeze student numbers, February 16). The evidence takes the form of estimates of productivity based on tax revenue from graduates and the investment put into their education.

It is important to remember, however, that citizens contribute to society not only as taxpayers but also as voters. Many important issues, such as European Union, genetic manipulation, or climate change, are debated in emotional terms because the current educational system does not provide an adequate basis to address such complex issues in any other way. The school curriculum is full and it would be unreasonable to expect more material to be crammed in.

There is a parallel with the trend towards universal literacy in the last century. The Victorians recognised the importance of literacy, and ensured that all children had a fair opportunity to achieve a reasonable level.

This, of course, cost time and money. Children had to be taken out of productive work and provided with schools and teachers. The reduction in the workforce was made possible by the industrial revolution, which was reducing the demand for labour. Nowadays schools are not seen as a means of reducing unemployment.

As society continues to grow in complexity, and the demand for labour sinks, it would appear natural that more time be spent preparing people to take a constructive part in it.
(Dr) Martin Juckes,
Munich, Germany

Writer astride two cultures

LAMBASTING Lacville is a recurring occurrence which I follow with the same mixture of enjoyment and annoyance as I do his column. And although he doesn't need me to defend him, I think the questions raised by Alison Martin Katz (January 5) are ones that occur to many readers and probably for the same reasons: we try to apply our finely tuned Western sensibilities to a culture which does not share them.

From his unusual position of living two very different cultures at the same time, Lacville is able to interpret everyday life in urbanised West Africa for a basically Eurocentric readership. He is often annoying because he makes us uneasy and seems smug. But hang on, isn't he jabbing an ironic finger in our European sides, as well as his own?

There are certainly other journalists from whom we could "hear the story". Lacville happens to do it very well. Write on, Robert.
J Brigg,
Luxembourg

Briefly

CATHERINE BENNETT (Suffer the children, February 9) correctly states: "The US population is growing faster than that of 18 other industrialised nations." What she doesn't state is that most US population growth is due to immigration.

The work of Tulane University demographer Leon Bouvier has shown that had the US limited its annual net immigration since 1970 to zero, US population growth would stop next century at about 247 million — 20 million fewer than today's population. Instead, due to high immigration and the high fertility of immigrant women, the US population will reach 370 million in 50 years if current trends continue.
John Mitchem,
San Jose, California, USA

OF COURSE, the £60 million future replacement for the royal yacht Britannia will be, in the eyes of the Conservative party, an excellent "symbol of the nation's pride" (Royal family dragged into yacht row, February 2) — as is the present BBC World Service. My students here marvel at the Service's professionalism and warmth, and the fact that it's advert-free.

The difference is that the BBC World Service reaches parts that Britannia, or her replacement, could never possibly steam into. However late, it's time the Conservative government started cutting in the right direction.
Joseph F Quinn,
Mantova, Italy

KEVIN WATKINS (Fast route to poverty, February 16) offers a timely reminder of the social, economic and human disaster that is a direct consequence of the multi-trillion-dollar obscenity of agriculture subsidies in Europe, USA and Japan.

If the Guardian wants to change the world for the better, there is no more constructive way than to campaign aggressively for the repeal of agricultural production subsidies. Not only will repeal leave the Third World better off, but the consumers of the rich world would be handsomely rewarded with lower taxes and food prices.
Robin Clulee,
Te Horo, New Zealand

"THE grey partridge is most often seen in a convoy . . ." (Tree sparrows under threat, February 16). I think the word should have been a covey (a small flock), one of a group of avian collective nouns such as a charm of goldfinch, a wisp of snipe, a spring of teal, a murder of crows, a watch of nightingales, a nye of pheasants, a murmuration of starlings, a dropping of shelduck, etc.
Christopher Wilson,
Wexford Wildfowl Reserve, Ireland

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Kim apologises for scandal

Moon Ihlwan in Seoul

IN A DRAMATIC gesture of contrition to try to salvage his presidency, South Korea's Kim Young-sam apologised in "agony and sorrow" on Tuesday for a loan scandal that has rocked the nation.

Appearing chastened and solemn in a televised address on the fourth anniversary of his inauguration, Mr Kim also said he was ashamed that his own son had become embroiled in the scandal swirling around the failed Hanbo Steel Co.

"The whole nation is now swept by shocks from the Hanbo incident," he said, his eyes downcast as he read from a prepared text. "I have travelled a one-way road with self-restraint and abstinence in the past four years and am devastated and in despair," he said, referring to the anti-corruption drive he launched shortly after taking office in 1993.

State prosecutors last week indicted 10 people, including a cabinet minister, prominent politicians from ruling and opposition parties, top bankers and the founder of the Hanbo Group, the country's 14th biggest conglomerate.

Mr Kim's second son, Hyun-chul, was questioned last weekend in connection with the affair but cleared of any wrongdoing. Mr Kim said, nevertheless, that he would bar his son, aged 38, from social activities until the end of his five-year term next February. Hyun-chul later said he would resign from all posts.

"Whatever the reasons, all these are the consequence of my lack of virtue. It is the responsibility of myself, the president," Mr Kim said. He said he would humbly accept all reprimands and criticism by the people. "I, as the president, offer a sincere apology to the people over this incident," he said in a low monotone in striking contrast to his combative last television appearance a month ago, when he assailed the political opposition.

Mr Kim also apologised over the controversial passage of a labour law that recalled the tactics of his military predecessors. The bill was rammed through parliament in a dawn session while opposition deputies slept. "I feel sorry for worrying the public while revising the labour law late last year," he said. The forced passage of the law sparked nearly a month of wildcat strikes.

Mr Kim, whose reformist image has also been tarnished by a hawkish stance towards North Korea and a crackdown on student protests, was starting his final year in office as the least popular president in history. His popularity, which topped 90 per cent as he launched his anti-graft campaign in 1993, is now hovering around 10 per cent.

Political analysts said the president, with his political gambler's instincts, was making a tactical retreat and would almost certainly make dramatic efforts to win back support before the December presidential election. He is constitutionally barred from seeking another term, but is eager to install a protégé in office to shield him in his retirement.

"Kim faces a host of problems and his options are limited," said Shin Jung-hyun, a political science professor at Kyunghee University. "He will be playing for time with the apology and try to bring about a new phase to keep his political control."

South Korea's cabinet ministers and top ruling party officials will offer to resign *en masse* to give the president a free hand to reshuffle his administration, government officials said on Tuesday. Mr Kim's top presidential Blue House aides have told the president they are prepared to go, one aide said.

A statement by the main opposition National Congress for New Politics welcomed Mr Kim's apology but repeated its demand for the appointment of independent prosecutors to restart the Hanbo probe and uncover the "real big hands" in the scandal.

Mr Kim said he would not retreat from his reform policies, in tatters now that the scandal has shown that corrupt links between politics and business are still deeply entrenched.

The president has frequently reshuffled his cabinet as his administration stumbles from one crisis to another. — *Reuter*

● The government in Seoul has kept up the pressure on China by announcing that it will resume diplomatic efforts to secure safe passage for Hwang Jang-yop, the senior North Korean official who has been holed up in the South Korean embassy in Beijing since February 12.

The North has given some signs of relaxing its opposition to Mr Hwang's transfer to Seoul. But there are indications of further unrest in the Pyongyang leadership.

China bids Deng farewell

Continued from page 1

nation for nearly 20 years, transforming an impoverished citadel of communist fervour into an economic and military giant driven by his maxim "to get rich is glorious".

His death heralds a period of political uncertainty in a one-party system that has known only two emperor-like leaders since the 1949 revolution of Mao, whose death in 1976 triggered a power struggle.

With Deng sick and unseen in public for three years, his power and titles have passed to his chosen successor, the president and Communist party chief, Mr Jiang. This arrangement was confirmed on Wednesday last week when Mr Jiang, a former party boss in Shanghai, was named head of a 459-member funeral committee.

Unlike Mao, whose embalmed body lies under glass in the middle of Tiananmen Square, Deng was cremated, in keeping with a written pledge by the entire leadership — including Mao — in 1956.

Deng, a chain-smoker until the last years of his life, suffered advanced Parkinson's disease with complications of lung infections. He died of respiratory failure after failing to respond to emergency treatment, said the official Xinhua news agency. It announced the news five hours after his death in the form of a "letter to the Communist party, the People's Liberation Army and the people of various ethnic groups throughout China".

The immediate reaction to Deng's death in Beijing was muted. His death brought praise, a few quiet curses and mostly shrugs. But it is this equanimity that should probably rank as one of his great achievements. The hysteria of Maoism belongs to the past. But so too its passions.

"Nobody is crying this time," said Li Yuanzhi, manageress of a Taiwanese-funded photograph studio on Wangfujing, the main shopping street of Beijing. "The age of crying is over."

Deng Xiaoping's widow, Zhuo Lin, kisses her husband farewell at the Babaoshan Revolutionary cemetery as daughter Deng Lin looks on in tears PHOTOGRAPH: FAN RUJUN

Empire State shootings

Tom Hays in New York and Ibrahim Barzak in Gaza City

THE Empire State Building was fitted with an airport-style baggage scanner and two metal detectors on Monday, a day after a Palestinian gunman went on a fatal shooting rampage.

New York's mayor, Rudolph Giuliani, blamed the shootings on laws that allowed Ali Hassan Abu Kamal to buy a gun weeks after arriving in the United States.

Seven tourists were shot last Sunday, one fatally, on the 86th-floor observation deck. Abu Kamal, who had concealed the gun under a long coat when he entered the building, then shot himself.

That Abu Kamal — a 69-year-old Palestinian who had been in the US only two months — could buy a Beretta semi- automatic handgun was "totally insane", Mr Giuliani said.

An anti-terrorist task force was still part of the investigation, Howard Safir, the police commissioner said, but so far it had found no evidence that Abu Kamal was aligned with any terrorist group.

In Abu Kamal's hometown of Gaza City, relatives said he had been distraught over losing his life savings of more than $300,000 and had no ties to Palestinian radical groups. Abu Kamal called home last Sunday and said he could not send tuition money to one of his sons, who was studying civil engineering in Russia, a son-in-law said.

Those who knew him recalled Abu Kamal as a refined man who wore expensive suits, an English teacher who felt more comfortable conversing in English than in his native Arabic. He felt out of place in the impoverished Gaza Strip and hoped to emigrate to the US.

On Monday, outside Abu Kamal's one-storey home in Gaza City, men erected a mourning tent. "I'm in shock. I can't believe my father carried out this act," said his daughter. — *AP*

The Week

KENNETH Starr, the independent counsel investigating the Whitewater scandal, concluded that the presidential aide Vince Foster committed suicide, and absolved the White House of a cover-up during the subsequent inquiry.
Martin Walker, page 6

JAMES Earl Ray, who has served 29 years in prison for the assassination of Martin Luther King, made his eighth attempt for a retrial in a Memphis court, this time with the backing of the King family.

LEBANESE security forces have denied that they are holding Japanese citizens. Officials of both countries had earlier said Lebanon had arrested suspected Japanese Red Army members.

A ZIMBABWEAN policeman was jailed for 10 years for murdering a colleague who teased him about his three-year homosexual liaison with Canaan Banana, the country's former president.

MORE than 100 people were feared drowned after a rebel boat crowded with refugees fleeing Sri Lanka's civil war overturned off the northern coast, a Tamil leader said.

A WARNING has been given by the World Health Organisation that up to 75 million people — twice the current figure — could be blind by 2020 unless there is a global effort to halt deteriorating eyesight.

MORE than 200 people were believed to have been buried under tons of mud and rocks that crashed down on two Andean villages in Peru.

SPANISH truckers returned to work after the government met some of their demands. The two-week strike cost billions of pesetas.

SOME 120 Hindu pilgrims died in Orissa, eastern India, when fire raged through the encampment of bamboo and thatch huts where they had gathered to pay homage to their late guru.

ISRAEL'S prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, has hired one of the country's best criminal lawyers to represent him after being questioned by police about an alleged influence-trading scandal that could topple his government.

THE South African president, Nelson Mandela, said he and other African leaders would meet Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko this month in a bid to end Zaire's civil war. Zairean government and rebel representatives began peace talks in South Africa.



A university student shouts during a riot outside the Kenya secret police building on Monday. Hundreds of Nairobi students took to the streets in a second day of protests at the mysterious death of a student leader, Solomon Muruli
PHOTOGRAPH: GEORGE MULALA

Serbia opposition's dreams come true

Julian Borger

SERBIA'S opposition brought an end to President Slobodan Milosevic's monopoly on power on Friday last week by installing one of its leaders as mayor of Belgrade, crowning a three-month campaign of street protests against the autocratic regime.

A crowd of 150,000 thronged central Belgrade and cheered and sang late into the night celebrating the election of Zoran Djindjic. The philosophy scholar, aged 44, was voted mayor by a city council dominated by members of the Zajedno (Together) coalition, in a ceremony Mr Milosevic had manoeuvred in vain for 90 days to prevent.

Mr Djindjic will wield few formal powers in Serbia's highly centralised state, but his election is a humiliation for the president, who reportedly told aides in November that he would never live in a city under opposition control.

Mr Milosevic tried to annul Zajedno's local election victories last November in Belgrade and 13 other cities, triggering street protests across the country.

"For the first time the opposition has the opportunity to address the public as elected officials," said Dejan Anastijevic, a journalist on the Belgrade-based magazine Vreme.

Cities controlled by Serbia's opposition will now provide a launching pad for Zajedno's campaign for this year's presidential and parliamentary elections. The new Belgrade city council said its first aim would be to restore the independence of the media and investigate the financial dealings of the outgoing Socialists. Mr Djindjic vowed demonstrations would start on March 9 outside the state-run television station, in an attempt to force fairer political coverage.

The cracks in Mr Milosevic's authority are increasingly visible, as former acolytes turn on him. The prime minister of Serbia's satellite republic, Montenegro, publicly branded him "an incompetent politician" and demanded his removal from "any office in Yugoslavia's political life".

In a magazine interview published last week, Milo Djukanovic, one of Montenegro's most powerful politicians, said: "There is no question that Milosevic's policy is not the policy for the future of the people of Serbia and Yugoslavia . . . He's stripped of any capability to handle strategic views and challenges that stand before our country."

Montenegro has only a sixteenth of Serbia's population, but its status as partner in the Yugoslav federation gives it the power to prevent Mr Milosevic switching from the Serbian to the Yugoslav presidency — one of his options for extending his lease on power when his term in office expires at the end of the year.

Montenegro has chafed increasingly under Belgrade's rule, objecting to the Socialist Party's statist economic policies and the spreading influence of the president's hardline wife, Mirjana Markovic. The ruling couple's handling of the election crisis appears to have brought those differences to a head.

Zajedno's short-term strategy is to break the Socialists' hold on local television and radio stations, and to start to divert tax revenue from state coffers to the municipalities. The first regular session of the Belgrade council will vote in a new governing board for the city's Studio B television station, a formerly independent channel taken over a year ago by the Socialists.

Zajedno's assumption of power in the main cities may bring problems as well as opportunities. Opposition councillors risk becoming the focus of discontent over the appalling state of services.

Success has brought frictions within the coalition to the fore. Vuk Draskovic, the leader of the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), criticised plans for the street celebrations to mark the rise to office of Mr Djindjic, who leads the SPO's coalition partner, the Democratic party. The SPO had nominated Mr Draskovic's wife, Danica, for a senior position in the city administration.

Africa under pressure to ban land-mines

Chris McGreal in Johannesburg

AN international conference opened in Mozambique on Tuesday aimed at persuading countries in the world's most mined continent to follow South Africa's lead in banning anti-personnel mines.

The conference of 200 non-governmental organisations — including the International Committee of the Red Cross, Oxfam and the Mines Advisory Group — will press for a regional ban on land-mines in southern Africa before any international accord to scrap the weapons.

South Africa gave the conference an important boost with its decision last week to scrap its stockpile of 160,000 mines and to ban future production. It may be no coincidence that the patron of the conference, in Maputo, is President Nelson Mandela's new partner, Mozambique's former first lady, Graça Machel.

But the South African government was under pressure from a wide range of opinion.

Mr Mandela was also encouraged to take the lead, given South Africa's responsibility for exporting many of the millions of land-mines scattered across Angola and Mozambique, among other countries.

In Angola alone, 100,000 people have been killed or injured by mines. Most of the victims are civilians. Officially, 9 million mines have been planted throughout the country, though the United Nations is shortly expected to give a lower estimate.

Last month, the Princess of Wales added to the growing calls for an international ban with a visit to Angola, where she waded into a political minefield by joining the call for an immediate end to production of mines.

The conference organisers are pressing African countries to sign a comprehensive ban proposed by Canada, fearing that alternative treaties could take years to negotiate and produce only limited restrictions.

Most Western countries favour negotiating an agreement through the UN disarmament conference in Geneva. Britain is arguing for outlawing the export and transfer of land-mines as a first step towards a ban on production and use. President Clinton, after initially rejecting participation by the United States, says he also backs an international agreement to scrap land-mines.

But it could take years to conclude a treaty that may not produce a comprehensive ban given the opposition of prominent manufacturers such as Russia and China.

The conference is scheduled to debate other changes to international policy on mines, including an end to the hiring by the UN and several governments of weapons' manufacturers to clear minefields at great expense.

Others are keen to ensure that any agreed ban is more than in name only. They cite Australia, which they accuse of producing a hand grenade that is a mine in all but name. The grenade can be fitted with a pressure pad, which campaigners say effectively makes it an anti-personnel mine.

UK to join FBI phone taps

Richard Norton-Taylor and Alison Daniels

BRITAIN has secretly agreed with its European Union partners to set up an international telecommunications tapping system in co-operation with the FBI, it was revealed on Monday.

The agreement covers telephones and written communications — telexes, faxes and e-mail. To make tapping easier, telecommunications companies will be obliged to give security and intelligence agencies the key to codes installed in equipment sold to private customers.

Detailed plans are being drawn up by officials in a secret network of EU committees established under the "third pillar" of the Maastricht Treaty, covering co-operation on law and order issues.

Civil liberties groups, while agreeing that there was a need for such an agreement to fight against serious crime, said the plans raised a number of privacy and data protection issues and must be the subject of a full public debate.

Britain is an enthusiastic supporter of joint action in this area, which is conducted on an inter-governmental basis with no role for the European Commission, the European Parliament or the European Court of Justice. It is an area where the EU's "democratic deficit" is most evident.

Key points of the plan are outlined in a memorandum of understanding signed by EU states in 1995, which is still classified. It reflects increasing concern among European intelligence agencies that modern technology will prevent them from tapping private communications.

EU governments agreed to co-operate closely with the FBI in Washington as they work out detailed plans.

Albright leaves Kremlin stirred but unshaken

David Hearst in Moscow

THE United States secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, left Moscow last week having failed to narrow the gap between Russia and the West on Nato's enlargement but with an improvement in the White House's relationship with the Kremlin to her credit.

She ended two days of talks with the wily and experienced Russian foreign minister, Yevgeny Primakov, with a handshake and a wink, and she frequently broke into Russian in her talks with him and President Boris Yeltsin.

Her effort to persuade Russia that Nato is a reformed organisation, far different from the one that opposed the Warsaw Pact in the cold war, included a proposal to limit Nato's military potential and its forces close to Russia's borders.

According to the New York Times, this will be done by forbidding an increase in the number of weapons in former Warsaw Pact countries joining Nato.

But the proposal, tabled simultaneously at talks on the 1990 Conventional Forces in Europe treaty in Vienna, falls short of Russia's demands for a ban on the construction of Nato bases on the territory of new members, or limits on the movement of Nato forces to new members.

US officials conceded that the Russians had not lessened their objections but consoled themselves with the fact that at least they were talking.

Mutual praise was the order of the day, Mr Primakov praising Ms Albright as an "iron lady, but a constructive lady" and Ms Albright praising Mr Yeltsin's mental fitness after an hour-long meeting with him.

The meetings have locked Russia and America into a series of highly complex and technical negotiations. Russia has made the renegotiation of a whole set of treaties the price of its begrudging acquiescence to Nato enlargement.

Earlier in the week, Ms Albright firmly rebuffed French attempts to set a "European" agenda for the enlargement of Nato and changes to its command structure.

Diplomats confirmed that Ms Albright stuck to her guns during her brief stopover in Paris, where she met the French president, Jacques Chirac, the prime minister, Alain Juppé, and the foreign minister, Hervé de Charette.

Ms Albright firmly ruled out eventual European control of Nato's southern command, as demanded by France, and French proposals for a five-country summit, including Russia and the four biggest Nato members, on the organisation's enlargement.

In Beijing on Monday, on the final stop of her trip, Ms Albright said she had "told China like it is" on human rights, leaving empty-handed but doggedly up-beat after talks with a Communist party leadership distracted by the death of Deng Xiaoping. The one-day visit, which coincided with the cremation of Deng's corpse, was scheduled before the paramount leader's death.

Indian summer cut short

COMMENT
Suzanne Goldenberg

IT STARTED well, but within a day it was suspicion and distrust as usual. When Pakistan's parliament assembled last week to endorse Nawaz Sharif as prime minister, he used the occasion to call for better relations with India.

"The problems of our cities, villages and the poor people are the same as in India. We think that we should spend most of our income on our people, our development, and our prosperity. India too must have the same wish," he said.

In New Delhi, the Indian prime minister, H D Deve Gowda, appeared to respond in kind, calling for a resumption of the dialogue that broke down three years ago over the disputed territory of Kashmir. "I reciprocate your sentiments in full measure," he said. "We believe there are a number of opportunities for mutually beneficial co-operation."

But that was as far as it went. Mr Gowda restated that Kashmir was an integral part of India — anathema to Pakistan, which wants the subject on the table from the start.

And that was all it took for Pakistan's army chief, General Jehangir Karamat, to step in, demonstrating again the supremacy of the military over elected politicians. In what was also a rebuff to Mr Sharif's efforts at conciliation, the general said Mr Gowda's words were "too dangerous to be ignored". Kashmir "can never be put on the backburner", he added.

Despite the chill that prevails in Indian and Pakistani relations, the prospects of a fourth war between them since independence appear removed. Extreme nationalism no longer evokes the passions it did.

But while Kashmir is the stated sticking point, other forces keep the two neighbours apart. The Pakistani press still gives undue prominence to any signs of religious unrest in India, seizing upon it as justification for Pakistan's establishment as a homeland for South Asia's Muslims. Indians, in turn, harbour a secret delight at Pakistan's inexpert attempts at civilian rule — no government has lived out its full term since independence — because it offers relief from their own flawed democracy and more widespread poverty.

But recent years have brought many changes: a weariness in both countries with the uprising in Indian-controlled Kashmir; satellite television that allows a glimpse of a neighbouring country that has otherwise remained largely off-limits; growing pressure from Washington to end a nuclear arms race; and the rise of modest peace movements.

And yet while there are relatively new prime ministers in both India and Pakistan, both of whom have expressed an interest in improving relations, it will take more than good intentions during this 50th year of independence to mend fences. Aside from offering justification for each country's separate existence, the mutual hostility offers a pretext when things go wrong.

Each country accuses the other of meddling in its internal affairs, charges for which there is some evidence. Neither Mr Sharif nor Mr Gowda are in a good position to overcome such suspicions. As Gen Karamat's intervention shows, the army remains the true power in Pakistan. Military spending consumes more than a quarter of Pakistan's budget, and such a pampered institution will not give way easily.

Nor are the prospects better for Mr Gowda. Hard-pressed to hold together his unwieldy coalition government, he is hardly going to give an opening to the right to attack him for being soft on Pakistan.

Oil nations seek cash for green cuts

Paul Brown

KUWAIT, Iran and other oil-producing countries are demanding financial compensation from the industrialised world for loss of revenue if any further action is taken to curb global warming.

China and the G77 group of 100 developing countries have backed the clauses on compensation tabled at the start of negotiations to set targets for Europe, North America and Japan to reduce carbon dioxide emissions into the next century. They argue that the industrialised world created the problem and should deal with it.

Representatives of more than 150 countries were due to meet in Bonn this week to begin drafting a protocol to the Climate Change Convention which will form the basis of world action beyond 2000.

Kuwait has proposed clauses that allow developing countries to claim for loss of "income from exports of fossil fuels, raw materials or finished or semi-finished goods" as a consequence of reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by industrialised countries.

Iran has demanded a "compensation fund" for oil producers into which every industrialised country would have to pay if it cut fossil fuel imports.

Green groups pushing for large and early cuts in greenhouse gas emissions see the demand by the oil producers as another blocking tactic. It will annoy the alliance of 36 small island states, such as the Maldives, which urge action to prevent rising sea levels from wiping them out.

Merylyn McKenzie Hedger for the World Wide Fund for Nature said: "The Kuwaitis . . . are not acting in good faith. They have signed the Climate Change Convention yet they are trying to bog down the negotiations . . . Climate change will damage livelihoods, health and food production — particularly in the poorest developing countries. If there is little or no action by the industrialised countries as a result of these spoiling tactics, it is the poor people round the world who will suffer."

John Gummer, the UK Environment Secretary, who has been pushing for 10 per cent cuts in carbon dioxide emissions by 2010 as a target by Europe, was not enthusiastic either. "They can ask for compensation but they won't get any. No chance," he said last week.

Amateur night on Diplomats' Row



The US this week

Martin Walker

BROUGHT UP and seasoned in the cold war years of hard news, when foreign policies mattered and behind each anguished diplomatic communiqué came the ominous sound of revving tank engines, we international correspondents have been a dispirited crew throughout the 1990s.

With the odd Gulf war and Bosnian exceptions to prove the rule, we have been turning our raw hands to the delights of peace, to the soft news of culture and society rather than politics and power, to the enriching novelties of Internets and global markets rather than the gritty business of cold war and rumours of hot war. It has been a wonderful change for the human family, but bad news for our parasitical profession that thrives on gloom and crisis.

But things are back on the old familiar rails. An elderly chain smoker, the lion of the Beijing bridge club, finally passes away in China, and we reach for the whiskery headlines about communist succession crises and then muse on the influence of the generals. A United States secretary of state tubthumps her way around the Nato capitals to say that with staunch American leadership, the Atlantic alliance is making some determined takeover bids in eastern Europe, and then lands in Moscow to tell the Kremlin why they have to swallow it.

All this sent me hunting through the files to unearth a memorable story, an epitaph for an era, filed on the front page of the New York Times in 1990 — the month after Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. Written with almost palpable glee and relief by the eminent Washington commentator R W Apple, it said: "In news bureaus and Pentagon offices, dining rooms and lobbyists' hangouts, the fever is back — the heavy speculation, the avid gossip, the gung-ho, here's-where-it's-happening spirit that marks the city when it grapples with great events".

So it was. And the flurry has returned from time to time, with the Soviet coup in Moscow, and with Boris Yeltsin's decision to send his tanks against the Russian Duma. Air strikes in Bosnia and cruise missile attacks on Iraq have returned just frequently enough to keep Washington's crisis-addiction alive and burning. But none of it quite lived up to Apple's exactingly feverish standard. Even the Gulf war, and the moment when the world woke up to the new thrill of CNN as it brought us the bombing of Baghdad — live — carried its own foreboding of the curiously transformed pecking order of news. The night the Gulf war broke out did not win CNN its highest-ever ratings; that record was reserved for the moment that redefined news values in the 1990s, the long, slow car-chase of the white Ford Bronco down the Los Angeles freeway that began the O J Simpson saga.

We Washington correspondents have been spoilt creatures. We have just had a presidential election, and have been trying to make sense of some arcane and ancient Arkansas land deals that might, just might, shake the First Family out of the White House. But it has been thin stuff. Bill Clinton rarely had to break sweat to get re-elected as that old warhorse Bob Dole failed to break into anything like a trot.

And Whitewater after Watergate exemplifies Marx's line about history repeating itself, the second time as farce. It has not been easy to get over-excited about the on-again, off-again investigation of the independent counsel into Whitewater, Kenneth Starr. He told us last week that he was stepping down from the job in August to become Dean of Pepperdine law school in sunny Malibu. A chorus of raspberries followed from the editorial pages, and squeals of "We Wuz Robbed" from the Republicans, while Clinton tried manfully to keep the smirk off his face. So then Starr said perhaps he had been a little hasty and would stay on after all.

"My children's father has learned a few things this week," he told a hastily convened press conference in his characteristically convoluted way. And then he slipped back into American to confide, "as we say in Texas, my mother didn't raise any dummies". Observing his squirming figure, the Washington press corps inquired as to exactly what she had raised, beyond a lawyer once touted as a Supreme Court nominee putting a brilliant career behind him.

A RELIEF, therefore, to be waiting eagerly for each new bulletin from Beijing, for each new Kremlin statement, for each new speech on Nato by Madeleine Albright. Great events are at hand again. Or are they? There is foreign policy, which is what secretary of state Albright has been doing last week in Europe and did again this week in post-Deng China. And there is Clintonian foreign policy, which is very different.

The Clinton administration is currently embroiled in three thundering international rows, in which Albright and all the tools of classic diplomacy have little part to play. Each one goes to the heart of the new, post-cold war foreign policy that the Clinton presidency has pioneered.

The first is the now-ferocious dispute with the European Union at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Geneva, an international judicial body that is meant to arbitrate and police the global free trade system that Clinton has helped, more than any other single political actor, to build.

For domestic political reasons, largely connected with winning votes in Florida, Clinton last year reversed himself and decided to support the otiose Helms-Burton Act, which seeks to force other countries to accede in the US trade embargo against Fidel Castro's Cuba. If you trade with Cuba, your company and your executives may be liable in US courts — however legal your trade under international law. The arrogance of the US position, in seeking to make its more ridiculous laws apply to other countries, is breathtaking.



Tour of duty . . . US secretary of state Madeleine Albright enters a Russian Orthodox chapel in Moscow PHOTOGRAPH: YURI KADOBNOV

The EU did the right thing. It understood that the US had a point in the general argument that trade with and investment in Cuba might be used to coax the regime into liberalisation. The EU issued a code of conduct for European investors, and launched a political dialogue with the Castro regime. Then it took the matter to the WTO court in Geneva, on the grounds that the Helms-Burton Act broke the spirit and letter of world trading rules. The WTO accordingly appointed a tribunal of international trade experts. The US then said that it would, if necessary, invoke the "national security" clause and simply ignore the hearing by the WTO, a body that the US helped to establish.

"We will not show up," said a senior US administration official, understandably insisting on anonymity, and looking distinctly embarrassed as he said it. "We do not believe anything the WTO says or does can force the US to change its laws."

Then Stuart Eizenstat, the undersecretary for commerce and Clinton's special envoy on the Cuban issue, added insult to injury by asserting that the Europeans were in the wrong. "By bringing non-commercial matters into the WTO, the EU may well jeopardise what we and others have worked so hard to achieve."

Really? If the US goes ahead with the national security ploy, it opens the door to the silly Japanese effort to ban rice imports in the name of "food security", and the South Koreans' attempt to protect their domestic car market by citing national security in their turn. This is the last thing the Americans want.

The US refusal even to notice, let alone play, by the rules, undermines the WTO just as it has secured a landmark agreement to liberalise global telecommunications markets, and attacks the very principle on which international law rests. The US position is churlish, arrogant and petty all at once, and outrages its closest allies, whom Albright was courting last week. Clintonian foreign policy prefers to waste its political capital with the Europeans to placate anti-Castro zealots in Florida and reactionaries in the US Senate.

Then comes the row with Mexico over that government's dismissal of General Jesus Gutiérrez Rebollo, the head of its anti-narcotics unit, on charges of corruption and links to a major drug trafficker. The US is furious that it was not tipped off by Mexico during the 12 days of investigation into Rebollo before his dismissal, a period during which the US Drugs Enforcement Administration was continuing to provide him with its sensitive intelligence on drug-trafficking.

Clinton, who said the matter was "deeply troubling", must decide this week whether or not to certify Mexico as being co-operative in the campaign against drugs. Failing certification, Mexico can be subject to trade and other economic sanctions, and risks losing the financial and logistical support the US provides to Mexico's drug control forces.

"This is a complex issue, and Mexico deserves some praise for moving swiftly to lance the boil of Rebollo. But once again, in a matter of acute sensitivity with one of the US's most intimate neighbours, Albright and traditional diplomacy are out of the game, in a foreign policy dominated by issues of crime, intelligence and domestic US politics.

Some more, shall we say, unorthodox diplomacy in Latin American is emerging from some unexpected Senate committee subpoenas into Clinton's role in frustrating a coup in Paraguay, and the donations of $806,000 from executives of Future Tech International. Mark Jimenez, the Philippines-born head of the Miami-based computer group, donated $100,000 to the Democratic National Committee on the day that the coup began, and as he was in the White House appealing to senior national security council staff to block the coup. Whether or not the donations or Jimenez's business interests in Paraguay were involved, Clinton opposed the coup, telephoned the beleaguered Paraguayan president, Juan Carlos Wasmosy, to promise support, and arranged sanctuary for him in the US embassy until the coup collapsed.

NOW comes another ill-timed row with China, which has spilled over from the US Senate's investigation of the Clinton campaign's unsavoury fund-raising operations, just as Albright headed for Beijing to forge ties with a government over which Deng Xiaoping's shadow no longer falls. Among a blizzard of subpeonas served last week, the Senate committee has demanded an account of the discussions at meetings between China's prime minister, Li Peng, and Mochtar Riady, the Indonesia-based head of the Lippo Group, a major source of funds for the Clinton campaign. A domestic political tussle between the White House and the Republican-controlled Congress is now fraught with international complications.

The Asian connections of the Clinton campaign's fund-raising have spiralled far beyond the initial probe of the Asian-American fundraiser John Huang. A former Lippo group employee, Huang was appointed to a senior post in the US department of commerce before joining the Democratic National Committee in 1995 as the main organiser of campaign donations from Asian-Americans. More than half of the $4 million he raised has been returned by the DNC as "improper".

In a separate and ominous investigation, the US justice department has brought in counter-espionage experts to help investigate meetings — apparently bugged by US intelligence agencies — that Huang held in the Chinese embassy, when he was being given US intelligence briefings on China and helping to craft US trade policies towards it. The implication understandably being drawn by the Republicans is that Clintonian foreign policy was up for sale to campaign donors, whatever their nationality, in a heady and colourful brew that mixes Red Gold with the Yellow Peril.

These various rows also show foreign policy is no longer the Great Game of nation-states. It is now far more entwined with money and trade and the rising issues of international crime, all of them increasingly at the mercy of domestic politics. None of this inspires any serious nostalgia for the bad old days of cold war and nuclear deterrence, and there are some ironic charms in observing the comic opera performance of Clinton and his not-quite diplomats as they fumble with the complex new agenda of our messy age. Perhaps Albright can restore some rigour to the process by reminding the trade warriors, the drug tsars, Senate investigators and campaign finance donors that foreign policy and the fevered atmosphere of R W Apple's cherished lunchrooms of power are no place for amateurs.

Wartime shadow over Wallenbergs

Jon Henley in Helsinki

IN SEPTEMBER 1945, a Swedish businessman presented the victorious Allies with an unusual problem. London planned to honour him with a knighthood for services to army intelligence; Washington wanted him blacklisted as an agent of Nazi Germany.

"I am reminded that Marcus Wallenberg has been recommended for a KCMG," reads a hitherto secret memorandum from the British legation in Stockholm. "Would you take steps . . . to obviate his appearing simultaneously on a list of Statutory Enemies?"

Marcus never got his KCMG. But as Sweden, in the wake of Switzerland, has begun reluctantly to re-examine its wartime past in a string of newspaper articles over recent weeks, it is discovering some uncomfortable truths about its most illustrious family and Europe's most powerful industrial dynasty.

For 140 years, the Wallenbergs have dominated the Swedish economy. On first-name terms with monarchs, presidents and prime ministers around the world, no other family — not the Rothschilds nor even the Rockefellers — has held such sway in one country.

The Wallenbergs, bankers to the Swedish royal family, have an empire today that includes Saab, the carmaker; the appliance manufacturer Electrolux; the mobile phone firm Ericsson and Stora, Europe's biggest paper company. They make up nearly half the value of the Stockholm bourse. With access to top European politicians and financiers, Wallenbergs supplied vital intelligence to the Allies. One, Raoul, has been lionised for saving the lives of up to 100,000 Hungarian Jews. In London this week the Queen was due to unveil a memorial to him.

But recently released documents suggest Raoul's relatives were ploughing millions of dollars of possibly looted Nazi gold into Swedish banks, selling arms components to the Wehrmacht, and acting as a front for Third Reich investments in the United States.

Sweden, though neutral, sold 35 million tons of iron ore to Nazi Germany. In return, it emerged in January, its central bank received 38 tons of gold — far more than it had previously admitted. The Swedish government has set up a commission to establish whether any gold looted from Holocaust victims remains in the country. The Wallenbergs were instrumental in all Sweden's wartime business dealings.

The Wallenbergs told the British of Hitler's planned invasion of Russia. Jacob, Marcus's brother, was also deeply involved with Carl Goerdeler, a central figure in the abortive German army plot to remove Hitler. But a Wallenberg engineering company, SKF, also supplied huge quantities of vital ball-bearings to the Luftwaffe. The family bank, Enskilda, was behind a complex scheme that effectively cloaked the US activities of the German electrical firm Bosch.

Perhaps the most damaging allegation came late in January. Based on yet more freshly uncovered US documents, it claimed that as part of the Bosch deal, Enskilda accepted gold from the German government worth some $13 million today. Guessing the gold was tainted, Jacob ordered it to be sold and the proceeds used to buy Swiss securities.

The family has so far stayed silent, although a spokesman, Nils Ingvar Lundin, said it would give government investigators access to Enskilda's wartime archives.

Bullet-proof fashions are a sure-fire hit

Jeremy Lennard in Bogotá

MIGUEL CABALLERO snatches up his handgun and fires a round into his business partner's chest. John Murphy staggers and falls down, but no blood is spilt. Mr Murphy is wearing his company's latest product, and this is no disagreement over expenses. This is merely an advertising shoot.

The enterprising pair have turned Colombia's high rate of violent deaths into a business opportunity. Using lightweight fabrics, they are marketing a range of high-fashion, bullet-proof clothing.

When they met at university, Mr Caballero was selling leather jackets to pay for his studies. Mr Murphy was offering a vehicle armour-plating service to taxi drivers in Bogotá.

"We decided to combine our expertise after a bodyguard friend complained about the bulk and discomfort of his protective clothing," said Mr Caballero. "We started out with $50 each, borrowed from our parents."

They set up their company in 1992, manufacturing reinforced leather jackets for Bogotá's young guns. But their original garments had one or two technical flaws.

"When I first shot John from close range, he suffered severe bruising to the abdomen and internal bleeding," said Mr Caballero sheepishly.

Undeterred, they returned to the drawing board and perfected their designs in time for the Colombian leather fair in 1993. Sales flourished and within two years they had expanded their range to include tuxedos, business suits, ball gowns and cocktail dresses. They now employ 24 people and turn over around $500,000 a year. Mr Caballero, meantime, has shot his partner 17 times.

For around $500, punters can buy a level-one jacket that will deflect small arms fire. For $800 customers get protection against a 9mm Uzi. Mr Caballero now plans to launch a range of children's wear and to offer customers garments made to order.

The Week In Britain James Lewis

Rifkind drops poison into single currency debate

MALCOLM RIFKIND, the Foreign Secretary, rocked the Tory boat when he declared, in a radio interview, that the Government was "hostile" towards plans for a single European currency by 1999. He may well be right, but it is not the official stance of the Prime Minister, John Major, who considers it "highly unlikely" that a Conservative government would join the proposed euro in 1999 and that, in the meantime, Britain should "wait and see".

The Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, long considered to be a natural ally of Mr Rifkind on the Tory Left, was clearly taken aback. He thought his Cabinet colleague had made "a slip of the tongue" under pressure from a skilful interviewer. It was an unlikely explanation, since Mr Rifkind, an Edinburgh lawyer, owns a very diplomatic tongue and defends himself skilfully under fire.

Some thought the Foreign Secretary was deliberately trying to push his party further towards the Eurosceptic right in order to outflank Labour for electoral purposes. Less charitable pundits suggested that he was positioning himself as a candidate to succeed Mr Major if the Tories lose the looming election.

Meanwhile the Health Secretary, Stephen Dorrell, has taken a sizeable step towards the Eurosceptics, leaving Mr Clarke increasingly isolated at the dovish end of the Euro spectrum.

All this was highly unsettling for the voters of Wirral South, where the Conservatives were defending a shaky majority of 8,000 in a byelection being held on Thursday this week. A defeat there would demolish the Government's majority in the Commons and give Labour a valuable launch platform for the general election in nine weeks' time.

Hugo Young, page 12

A PUBLISHER attracted widespread condemnation when he revealed plans to launch a UK edition of a paedophile directory, despite warnings that it could lead to mob justice.

Alister Taylor, who has published similar directories in Australia and New Zealand, reignited the debate over public disclosure of sex offenders' details when he claimed the release of this information was vital because most paedophiles re-offended.

A foretaste of the possible consequences was to be found in Manchester, where a frail and innocent pensioner was badly beaten by a gang of vigilantes because he was mistaken for a convicted paedophile whose address had been published by the local evening newspaper.

Comment, page 12

THE PAST 22 months have been the driest since 1767. The water companies hope to get through the summer without imposing restrictions on water use, though they warn that reservoirs and groundwater supplies are very low.

In the southeast of England, the supply crisis could prevent new towns and villages from being built. Ray Tennant, chairman of the Water Companies Association, said it was pointless for the Government to claim England needed 4.4 million new homes when there was no water to supply them in places of greatest growth such as Hampshire and Sussex.

A Labour party study showed that, in the six years since privatisation, the 10 leading water companies have reduced their labour forces by 21.5 per cent (more than 10,000 people), while increasing boardroom pay by 383 per cent. Anglian Water continued the trend by announcing plans to axe another 300 more jobs.

PLANS by Stephen Dorrell to remove "political correctness" from the adoption process were dismissed by the British Association of Social Workers as "little more than pre-election posturing".

Many couples have been aggrieved at the reasons given for refusing to allow them to adopt. A British man and his wife, of Asian extraction, were turned down because they did not have enough experience of racial abuse. Another couple were rejected for being overweight, although they had been accepted as foster parents.

Under Mr Dorrell's plans, adoption panels will include more lay members, and prospective adoptive parents will have a right of appeal if they are turned down.

TRAINING for primary school teachers will in future have to conform to a national curriculum that will emphasise traditional methods for teaching reading and writing (including phonics), spelling, punctuation, handwriting and mental arithmetic. The Education Secretary, Gillian Shephard, said too many children had for too long been "let down by teachers who do not have a sufficient grasp of the basics".

On this, at least, Labour is in agreement. The shadow education secretary, David Blunkett, would also retrain all primary teachers in teaching literacy as part of scheme to guarantee that every child becomes a competent reader by the age of 11. And there would be compulsory three-week literacy summer schools for 10- and 11-year-olds who fall behind.

Meanwhile data from the Graduate Teacher Training Registry shows a sharp fall in the number of school-leavers and undergraduates wanting to become teachers, fuelling concern about an impending shortage of qualified staff.



Dolly the sheep, cloned from an udder cell by a team of British scientists PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MacLEOD

Scientists scorn sheep clone fears

Tim Radford

SCIENTISTS dismissed fears of a "Brave New World" of cloned superhumans, after reports that a lamb has been cloned from one cell taken from the udder of an adult sheep last weekend.

In the current issue of the science journal Nature, Ian Wilmut of the Roslin Institute near Edinburgh reveals details of how he took a cell from the mammary gland of an adult sheep, treated it to "forget" it was a specialised cell, and fused it into an unfertilised egg from which all DNA had been removed.

He and colleagues then implanted the test-tube embryo in a surrogate mother. The result was a clone. "Apart from showing the biological principle that it is possible to get a cell to begin development again in this way, the initial importance is that we will be able to use this for research in biology and also to make new health care products," said Dr Wilmut.

Dolly, the lamb born from the test-tube embryo, is an identical twin of the "parent" ewe that donated the cell.

The birth is a world-first: biologists have been cloning plants from cells for decades, and from frogs for years. Last year Dr Wilmut and colleagues made history by cloning two lambs from a cell line preserved in a laboratory. But that was done from embryo cells. Embryo cells divide, and for a while each new cell is identical with its parent. But then cells are mysteriously "instructed" to become bone, or skin, or brain or blood or nerve cells, and remain for ever different from the cells of conception.

If sheep can be cloned, so in theory can humans. But even identical twins — clones from the same cell — do not behave identically. Dr Wilmut dismissed the idea of human clones, and other scientists said attempting to clone humans would be unlikely and pointless — as well as being illegal in Britain.

In the United States President Clinton asked a US bioethics advisory commission to review the implications for human beings.

Scientists believe the research could help answer many questions about cell biology. It could also be used to "photocopy" animals that had been genetically engineered to produce pharmaceutical products.

Abortions up 14pc after Pill warning

Chris Mihill

ABORTIONS rose by more than 14 per cent to a six-year high after women were warned that certain contraceptive pills carried an increased risk of blood clots, figures released last week show.

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) said abortions in England and Wales rose by 5,241 (14.5 per cent) to 42,683 in the year to the second quarter of 1996. The Pill scare came in the previous autumn.

Ann Furedi, director of the Birth Control Trust, said: "Nobody can prove that the additional abortions have been caused directly by the Pill panic, but . . . there is no other convincing explanation."

The abortion rate in the second quarter of 1996 was 3.3 per thousand resident women aged 14 to 49. This approached the highest recent peak of 3.5 per thousand in the first quarter of 1990. Between then and 1995 there was a fall in the rate.

The Committee on Safety of Medicines warned in October 1995 of an increased risk of blood clots associated with newer, "third generation" pills. It said they carried the risk of causing a blood clot in 30 per 100,000 users, compared with 15 per 100,000 users of the older type of pills.

There was widespread condemnation of the way the announcement was made at the time, with doctors and family-planning groups warning that women would be scared into abandoning a reliable contraceptive.

Abortion charities and some health service clinics have reported local rises in terminations, and the ONS figures confirm this. There have also been anecdotal reports from some obstetric units of a sharp rise in births in the nine to 12 months following the Pill scare.

Gillian Vanhegan, the medical spokeswoman for Brook Advisory Centres, said: "Research shows that unintended pregnancy is more likely during the first year of using any new contraceptive, so women who decided to stop the Pill altogether and switch to another method will inevitably be at higher risk."

A spokesman for the Department of Health said: "The Committee on Safety of Medicines made it clear that women should continue to take their contraceptive pill until they were able to see their doctor or family planning clinic."

Fur flies in council chamber

WHEN Neil Griffin becomes mayor of Durham in May he will bear the weight of his principles on his shoulders. The mayoral robe is being shortened and trimmed with fake fur to fit the new mayor's stature and his ideals, *writes Clare Longrigg*.

Mr Griffin, a vegetarian who does not wear fur or leather, was unhappy about donning the musquash-trimmed garment. Before his election on May 6, the balding trim will be unpicked and replaced with fake fur at a cost of around £500.

But the restoration has raised the hackles of councillors, and Mr Griffin, a Labour representative, has been accused of running up costs. His principal accuser, Liberal Democrat Nigel Martin, says his scruples are causing needless expense.

But the real objections seem to have little to do with dead furry animals. "Several opposition councillors have served Durham city for donkey's years. They would be quite happy wearing the robe, even with the musquash fur. And I think £500 could be better spent elsewhere."

A spokeswoman at the mayor's office said the council was attempting to keep up with popular anti-fur feeling.

Mr Griffin admitted he was pleased by the decision, but declined to take the credit. "The decision was taken to go with a publicly acceptable alternative. This is an attempt by one person to make mileage out of the fact that I am a vegetarian."

Ceiling placed on police damages

Alan Travis

A £50,000 ceiling was last week placed on awards for damages by juries to victims of police brutality.

The ruling by the Court of Appeal, in response to an action by the Metropolitan police, also resulted in the first guidelines for juries on the level of damages to be awarded in cases of false imprisonment, malicious prosecution and assaults by police.

The immediate effect of the ruling was to reduce the £220,000 in exemplary damages awarded by the courts last year to Kenneth Hsu, aged 32, a south London hairdresser, who was punched and kicked, racially abused, and wrongfully held in a cell for 1½ hours. The judges said £35,000 was more appropriate; the incident had been over in a matter of hours, and his basic award already included an element of aggravated damages.

Mr Hsu's award was one of two test cases brought by Sir Paul Condon, the Metropolitan police commissioner, in an attempt to halt the growth in civil cases brought by the victims of police misconduct. Much to the dismay of police, victims have been turning to the courts rather than the official police complaints procedure to obtain redress.

The Met's action follows two "record-breaking" awards last year, Mr Hsu's and £302,000 to Daniel Goswell, who was hit with a truncheon after being handcuffed. Recent Home Office research estimated that police payouts for civil claims in England and Wales would reach £300 million a year by 2005.

The Met's solicitor, David Hamilton, said he hoped that nine awards against which there were outstanding appeals would now be settled by negotiation. He said the courts had indicated that "exemplary damages are there to introduce an element of punishment if the overall value of the award without it is insufficient to mark disapproval. But once you are administering the punishment, don't forget it is public money and a windfall for the plaintiff. There is a balance to be struck."

Mr Hsu said he was very disappointed with the outcome of the appeal: "I am now afraid of the police. The memory is always there."

The guidelines for juries laid down for the first time by the Appeal Court say that the amount of the award is to compensate the victim, not to punish the police officer. Juries should be told "the appropriate bracket of damages to use as a starting point" for their discussions. For example, in a case of wrongful arrest and imprisonment, that is put at £500 for the first hour of illegal detention with a reducing scale for every extra hour.

The absolute maximum of £50,000 should only be awarded for particularly bad conduct by officers of at least the rank of superintendent.



THE first female army officer to sue the Ministry of Defence for sexual harassment last week received an apology and damages for the abuse she suffered during her army career, *writes Clare Longrigg*.

Lieutenant Alisa Cook (above) claimed she was subjected to a campaign of bullying by male officers in the Royal Artillery between 1992 and 1993. In one incident smouldering CS gas canisters were thrown into the room where she was showering.

PHOTOGRAPH: BEN GURR

Sado-masochists' appeal fails in landmark court ruling

Clare Dyer

THREE gay sado-masochists jailed for inflicting pain on each other for sexual pleasure lost their fight against the UK government last week in the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

The ruling marks the final chapter in the notorious Operation Spanner case, which started a long-running debate on whether the state should attempt to regulate what consenting adults do in private if no serious or lasting harm is caused.

Sixteen men were prosecuted after police accidentally found videotapes of their activities, carried out behind closed doors.

In a landmark ruling, the Strasbourg judges said the Government had the right to interfere in the private lives of people to protect public health and morals. The judgment is the latest in which the judges seem to have heeded pleas by Britain to give greater weight to a country's particular social mores.

Colin Laskey, Roland Jaggard and Anthony Brown, who took the case to Strasbourg, were three of the 16 men convicted in 1990 of causing actual bodily harm and wounding.

They were jailed for terms ranging from 12 months to three years, reduced on appeal to three months and six months.

Their appeal to the law lords was dismissed by a three to two majority ruling that consent was no defence under the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act, even with no serious harm. In a later case, a man who branded his wife's buttocks was acquitted.

The men's sex acts mainly involved genital abuse with hot wax, sandpaper, fish hooks and needles, as well as ritualistic beatings with spiked belts, stinging nettles and a cat-o'-nine-tails.

Patients face record wait

HOSPITAL waiting lists have hit a record high ahead of the general election after health managers were told to let non-urgent patients queue longer in order to ensure treatment of emergency cases, *writes David Brindle*.

Quarterly figures released last week show that almost 1.1 million people in England were waiting for in-patient treatment at the end of December, a rise of 3.2 per cent. Numbers waiting more than a year soared by 46 per cent to 6,900.

Gerald Malone, the health minister, said the figures showed the NHS had "maintained gains made in recent years for non-urgent admissions".

This was "a tremendous achievement because the focus has now moved on to improving priority services, particularly emergency and mental illness services".

Hume savages Sinn Fein's tactics

David Sharrock

A VOTE for Sinn Fein would be an endorsement of murder, John Hume, architect of the IRA ceasefire, said last week in an attempt to stop moderate nationalist voters deserting his party.

The Social Democratic and Labour Party leader warns that voting for Sinn Fein is voting for armed struggle. If Sinn Fein won the leadership of northern nationalism at the general election, its people would be cut adrift from an international alliance he had built over many years. Mr Hume confirms in an article in the Irish News that there will be no electoral pact with Sinn Fein without a new ceasefire. "It would be the equivalent of asking our voters to support the killing of innocent human beings by the IRA," he said.

He draws a sharp comparison between the few hours taken by Sinn Fein to pronounce "dead" any hope of an electoral arrangement between the parties and the "agonising delays in which we awaited their response to every development in the peace process".

He goes on to attack Sinn Fein's electoral methods. "My party has revealed evidence of their continuing intention to engage in every kind of electoral malpractice, from multiple registration of their own members to the forging of medical cards to facilitate vote-stealing. Already there have been brutal and cowardly attempts to intimidate leading SDLP members in Derry who man the polling stations to prevent impersonation and electoral abuse. All this is followed by false allegations that it is the SDLP which steals votes."

Mr Hume asks voters to consider the impact on Irish citizens south of the border "if northern nationalists were seen to throw in their lot with the movement that murdered [police detective] Jerry McCabe and so many other innocent people".

He suggests the need for a time frame for his talks with Gerry Adams, Sinn Fein's leader, about a ceasefire. "It would be unreasonable to expect me and my party to go on, month in month out, going over the same arguments."

Mr Hume said that in last May's forum election in Northern Ireland, when Sinn Fein secured 15.7 per cent of the vote, some SDLP voters thought they could have the luxury of voting for Sinn Fein to encourage the IRA to make peace and tell John Major they wanted inclusive talks.

"The result was that the republican movement claimed an increased mandate for their strategy and within weeks they had broken their de facto ceasefire in the north, threatening to plunge us back into a full-scale resumption of violence".

Tate scoops £18m jackpot from lottery

THE National Lottery made one of its biggest payouts when the Heritage Lottery Fund distributed £137 million among 23 museums and archive projects, *writes Dan Glaister*.

The largest amount went to the Tate Gallery in London, which receives £18.75 million for its Centenary Development to extend part of its Millbank site. The smallest, £1.14 million, goes to the National Waterways Museum in Gloucester.

Lord Rothschild, chairman of the Heritage Lottery Fund, said: "Breathing life back into museum lungs will be a great achievement for the National Lottery."

Other beneficiaries included the Manchester City Art Gallery, the Manchester Museum, and the Museum of Science and Industry in Castlefield — which between them receive almost £35 million.

The National Portrait Gallery receives £11.9 million, the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh £6.3 million, and the British Film Institute £13.8 million towards maintaining and updating its archive in Berkhampsted.



The Badminton Game by David Inshaw, to be put on view in 2000

The £18.75 million grant to the Tate Gallery will be added to a donation of £7 million from an anonymous British-born, US-based benefactor and more than £500,000 of other donations to finance a £30 million project to extend and refurbish the north-west quarter of the gallery.

The work should be completed by 2000, to coincide with the opening of the new Bankside gallery. Once the new gallery is open, the Tate at Millbank will focus on exhibiting British art.

Nick Serota, the Tate's director, said: "We show 500-600 British pictures. This plan will increase that number by 250."

The Tate exhibits only 15 per cent of its permanent collection.

Fury at 'der Jude' slur

Rebecca Smithers

A ROW blew up at Westminster last week after a German newspaper described the British Foreign Secretary as "der Jude [the Jew] Rifkind".

MPs reacted with fury at "disgusting, anti-Semitic" comments in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung on Malcolm Rifkind's keynote speech on Europe in Bonn earlier in the week. MPs demanded an apology — but got only half of one. The newspaper's publisher, Günther Nonnenmacher, accepted there was no need for a Jewish reference but said no offence had been intended.

The row broke out after Michaela Wiegel reported on Mr Rifkind's appeal for a reassesment of the concept of the European superstate. She claimed she was making a joke out of his reference to the German Protestant reformer, Martin Luther. But the word "Jude" is generally avoided because of Nazi associations.

Sir John Gorst, Tory MP for Hendon North, whose constituency includes much of Golder's Green, said Britain's Jews would find the remarks "extremely offensive".

'Bent copper' gets 10 years

A SERVING Metropolitan Police officer from a station at the centre of corruption allegations has been sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment after being found guilty of conspiring to smuggle cannabis worth millions of pounds into Britain, *report Duncan Campbell and Lawrence Donegan*.

Ronald Palumbo, a detective constable at Stoke Newington police station, north London, was one of four men jailed for their part in a drug-running operation uncovered when Customs officers stopped a lorry returning from Spain in November 1995 and found cannabis worth more than £2 million.

The jury at Canterbury crown court was told Customs believed the gang had carried out three other smuggling trips on the same scale. Judge James Vine told the 32-year-old police officer he was a "bent copper". Palumbo, of Chingford, Essex, had previously issued a writ against the Guardian seeking damages for alleged libel in connection with an article he claimed defamed him.

Tories push US-style workfare plan

Rebecca Smithers

JOHN Major and his senior ministers are poised to make the extension of a US-style workfare scheme a key plank of the Conservative election manifesto, although it has helped only one in 10 participants to get jobs.

The scheme, dubbed Project Work, has been tested in two pilots since April, and will be extended to 15 more areas in a £100 million push designed not only to help the long-term unemployed but also to force "dole scroungers" off the unemployment register, as people on benefit who do not take up places on the scheme lose their entitlement to benefit.

A further 14 areas will be added next April, and the private sector will be invited to take part in pilots in Manchester, London, Glasgow and Birmingham when they start in June.

But Labour cited the official figures, which show that of the 6,800 people who have taken part in the Hull and Medway pilots, only 700 were placed directly in a job during the first 13 weeks. More than 850 people referred to work experience failed to turn up on the first day.

Sir Edward Heath, the former Prime Minister, meanwhile said a minimum wage and the Social Chapter need not cost many jobs. He also aligned himself with Labour's policies on devolution. Eurosceptic backbenchers challenged Sir Edward to leave the party.

Later Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary said she would not pre-empt any decision by the inner group of Cabinet ministers meeting to discuss the election manifesto this week. But she made it clear that extension of the scheme to all long-term jobless would go ahead provided it proved self-financing.

Monday's meeting was confined to the Prime Minister's most trusted ministerial advisers, including Deputy Prime Minister Michael Heseltine, Chancellor Kenneth Clarke, President of the Board of Trade Ian Lang, Home Secretary Michael Howard and party chairman Brian Mawhinney. It was one of a series to finalise manifesto details, following last month's all-day Cabinet meeting at Chequers.

In a further move to get the party into a positive mood before this week's Wirral South byelection, which the Conservatives seemed set to lose, the Cabinet was due to announce on Tuesday plans to privatise London Underground. The Tories are keen to regain the political momentum and expose a "black hole" in Labour's spending plans.

Up to £600 million of the predicted £2 billion proceeds of the sell-off will be pledged to reinvestment in the crumbling network, if the Tories win a fifth term on May 1.

That promise, from Transport Secretary Sir George Young in a Commons statement, is designed to reassure voters in key London marginals where Labour plans to attack the sale — despite London Conservative MPs insisting it is a potential vote-winner.

Consultants will examine three main possible privatisation options: the lock, stock and barrel sale of the entire network; the franchised sale of individual lines to reflect the sale of British Rail; and the piecemeal sale of trains, lines and stations.

In Brief

VERONICA GUERIN, the Irish reporter shot dead to stop her investigations into organised crime, was named Journalist of the Year in the What The Papers Say awards. The Guardian was Newspaper of the Year, and was particularly commended for its revelations of corruption in Parliament.

SEAN O'CALLAGHAN, the convicted IRA killer turned anti-Provisional crusader, took his campaign against Sinn Fein's peace process to the United States after securing a visa on the same terms as Gerry Adams did three years ago.

ALAN HOWARTH, the Conservative MP who defected to Labour, said he would apply for the safe seat of Newport East, being vacated by the veteran MP Roy Hughes.

REIGATE Tories will replace ousted MP Sir George Gardiner with a new parliamentary candidate. The shortlist includes Northern Ireland minister Sir John Wheeler and rightwing MP Terry Dicks.

THREE hospitals are tracing patients treated by a junior doctor who died suddenly after it emerged he was HIV positive.

THE Tory MP Winston Churchill received another windfall thanks to his impressive lineage after his late mother, Pamela Harriman, left him a multi-million-dollar fortune.

ELEVEN people, including a mother and her eight-year-old daughter, died in gale-force winds and rain storms that swept the country.

SION Jenkins, the foster father of Billie-Jo Jenkins, was arrested in connection with the 13-year-old schoolgirl's murder in Hastings, East Sussex.

THE National Heritage Secretary, Virginia Bottomley, has ruled out letting National Lottery operator Camelot extend its games overseas.

FRANK Launder, who wrote, directed and produced some of the most popular films in the heyday of British cinema — including the St Trinian's comedies — died in Monaco, aged 91.

JACK Straw, the shadow home secretary, has offered another Commons free vote on the age of homosexual consent, which now stands at 18.

FILM actor Al Pacino is to become a "godfather" of the rebuilt Globe Theatre in London. Best known for his portrayals of mafiosi, Mr Pacino accepted an invitation to join the artistic directorate of the reconstructed Shakespearean theatre.

Concern over McAliskey jail conditions

Owen Bowcott and Denis Staunton in Berlin

A PANEL of prison officers, doctors, probation staff and social workers is to meet shortly to consider whether an imprisoned woman who is six months pregnant should have her baby taken away from her when it is born.

The exceptional review of security surrounding Roisin McAliskey in Holloway prison in north London comes amid mounting anxiety in Dublin, Bonn and London over attempts to extradite her to Germany.

She is wanted there to face questioning over an IRA mortar attack on a British army base at Osnabruck last year. She denies any involvement. The imprisonment of Ms McAliskey, aged 25 and the daughter of Bernadette McAliskey, the former nationalist MP, is assuming the status of a *cause célèbre*. Last week the Irish foreign minister, Dick Spring, called in the British ambassador in Dublin, Veronica Sutherland, to demand Ms McAliskey be given bail and to warn that she "is entitled to a certain basic decency" in her prison conditions.



Roisin McAliskey arrives in London last November after her arrest in Northern Ireland PHOTOGRAPH: TIM OCKENDEN

Last week the German federal prosecutor's office in Karlsruhe revealed that it had been "swamped" with letters complaining of the conditions. Determined to avoid blame for her long-term detention as a category A prisoner pending extradition, Peter Maure, the German lawyer handling the case, insisted: "We made no representations whatsoever about the conditions. [The British authorities] should do whatever is appropriate under their law — keep her in or let her out." She is the only category A prisoner among the 500 women in Holloway.

Her partner, Sean McCotter, 31, visits her often. "We haven't even been able to hold hands since she was arrested last year," he said from his home in East Tyrone. "She hasn't been in fresh air for three months. Category A means someone is an exceptional risk of running away, but she can't go anywhere in the state she's in." The Prison Service said she had had outside exercise.

Under Home Office guidelines prisoners having pre-natal checks should have their restraints removed "on arrival in a hospital waiting room, unless she is judged to present a high risk of escape". When Ms McAliskey went to Greenwich hospital for a scan, it is alleged that her handcuffs were not removed until in the treatment room. The hospital would not confirm this.

Before Christmas, she was in Belmarsh high security jail where, according to her solicitor, Gareth Peirce, she was put in a punishment cell previously used by prisoners on a "dirty protest". "She could not eat for three days because of the stench," Ms Peirce said. "Her body began to eat into her muscles. She's been told to be prepared to be separated from her child after it's born."

With the prospect of an appeal to the House of Lords, her case could drag on for years.

UK firms top US donations

BRITISH-OWNED corporations are the leading source of foreign funds for US political campaigns, usually for the Republican party, a survey of Federal Electoral Commission records shows, *writes Martin Walker in Washington*.

Despite the outcry over donations to Bill Clinton's campaign from Asian sources, the US subsidiaries of an array of British blue-chip corporations have between them given considerably more. The biggest foreign donor over the past two years was Canadian-based Seagram distillery group, which gave \$650,000 to the Republicans and \$270,000 to the Democrats.

Close behind came the US subsidiaries of British American Tobacco Industries, which gave \$565,000 to the Republicans; Glaxo-Wellcome (\$441,100 to the Republicans, \$46,400 to the Democrats); BP (\$217,579 to the Republicans, \$52,000 to the Democrats) and ICI Americas, (\$88,200 to the Republican, \$48,750 to the Democrats).

Judge backs man who rejected donor twins

Clare Dyer

THE unmarried mother of twins conceived abroad with sperm from an anonymous donor lost her High Court battle last week to have her former lover declared their legal father.

Ms U, who cannot be named for legal reasons, went to Rome with her lover, Mr W, for in-vitro fertilisation treatment in 1994. Originally the couple hoped to use Mr W's sperm, but it was of poor quality, and an embryo created from his sperm and Ms U's egg failed to survive.

The couple had agreed that eggs from Ms U could be fertilised with sperm from an anonymous donor, and six embryos were put in her womb. Mr W, who had left Rome earlier, met Ms U at Heathrow on her return, but they had a row and split up.

Three of the embryos, created with sperm from an Eastern European donor or donors, were implanted successfully but Ms U was advised to have one aborted to save the other two. Since the twin boys were born two years ago, Mr W has refused to acknowledge them or pay for their support, and has only occasionally seen them in the street.

Ms U, who is on legal aid, needed the court declaration to pursue Mr W for child support.

The unprecedented case exposes a loophole in the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act, which would have made him the twins' legal father had the treatment been carried out in Britain. The act provides that where a couple have infertility treatment together, even if unmarried, the man is deemed to be the father of any resulting children.

Lawyers for Ms U said the case was likely to go to the Court of Appeal. One said: "Suppose you have two couples and one goes to Edinburgh for treatment and the other to Dublin and both men are killed on the way back. One child would have a father and the other wouldn't."

Ms U's lawyers argued that the section of the act which made the man the legal father only if treatment was carried out in a British clinic contravened European law, which guarantees free access by EC nationals to medical treatment in another member state.

Diane Blood successfully mounted a similar argument against the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority's ban on using her dead husband's sperm without his written consent.

Had the argument succeeded in Ms U's case, part of an Act of Parliament would have been struck down as inconsistent with EU law. The Attorney General, Sir Nicholas Lyell, intervened in the case and briefed lawyers to support Mr W's stance and defend the legislation.

The judge held that the section did restrict free movement abroad because it was likely to deter couples from seeking infertility treatment in another EU state. But this was justified because the strict requirements of the act made it certain that the mother's partner could be clearly identified later if required, and that the man knew the expensive financial obligations he was taking on.

The judge said Ms U, now aged 37, was single when she began an affair in March 1990 with Mr W, now 54, who was married but childless. Both lived in the West Country.

He was a casino manager and she worked as a croupier on ships. He left his wife in November 1990.

From an early stage Ms U wanted to have a child by him and "he was content that she should do so". They underwent treatment in Britain before she read about Dr Severino Antinori, the Italian infertility specialist who helped a 59-year-old British woman have twins, and decided to travel to Rome for treatment.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
March 2 1997

China's future under Jiang

THE FUNERAL of Deng Xiaoping took place in the same atmosphere of well-controlled calm that has been a feature of the past few days in China. The lack of disorder has been welcome as an augury for the future. To some others it may have been a slight disappointment: what happened to the high drama expected "when Deng dies?" Predictions of serious unrest were unrealistic for two reasons. First, because the authorities have had plenty of time to formulate their policy that Stability Must Prevail Over Everything. With the plainclothes police quick to whisk away a lone wreath-bearer in Tiananmen Square, stability has certainly prevailed. The aim has been as much to keep the crowds — which can gather so quickly in China's busy streets — under control as to deter political protest. But when the police in Chengdu last week cleared away mourning wreaths from beneath the statue of Mao Zedong in the city centre, they must have been well aware that in June 1989 demonstrators burnt down an entire shopping market down the road.

The other reason for an atmosphere of calm is that emotions are not very intense. Mr Deng has been regarded as the architect of change rather than the great helmsman of revolution. The modest funeral arrangements reflect his own distaste for the rituals that surrounded Mao's death, and are in keeping with earlier and more austere traditions in the Communist party. While many Chinese are unhappy about the pervasive corruption and criminality of life today — and blame the ruling élite for it — their dissatisfaction has not reached a critical mass. It is balanced by the huge improvement in living standards for the majority: those who remain below the poverty line live in more remote parts of the country or as migrant workers without an effective voice.

The political élite has a natural interest in controlling its own internal differences. Reports last weekend indicated that leftist ideologues were continuing to snipe at the market reforms promoted by Deng and his successor, Jiang Zemin. But such activity by elderly dogmatists is — to use Mao's phrase — the buzzing of mayflies, drowned by the thunder of economic change up and down the country. The top leaders will continue to jockey for power in the run-up to the party congress later this year, but within parameters set by their mutual interest in ensuring that the apparatus holds together.

The ritual pledges of loyalty from the armed forces to Mr Jiang are a reminder of what keeps the structure of party and state in place. Both Mao and Deng had sufficient stature to take the army's support for granted. Mr Jiang cannot show the same achievements. It is healthy for China that the age of great, though flawed, heroes is over, but it increases the need for institutional change. Mr Jiang is believed to have said that any thought of political reform should be postponed until the next party congress but one — another five years. Instead his regime will stress patriotic and nationalistic values as a means of social cohesion.

China is poised to make a more explicit bid for global status. Yet the new leadership won't have forgotten the lesson of the post-Mao years that Deng taught China: economic policy in its broadest sense comes first. The problem is maintaining growth without widening social divisions, and how to provide legitimate outlets for dissatisfaction. Mr Jiang will succeed if he also realises that stability may be imposed for a special occasion, but ruling by tight control cannot work for ever.

When justice is forged

THE BRIDGEWATER THREE were released last week in an atmosphere of euphoria and bitterness but amid total incredulity as to how such a gross miscarriage of justice could have taken so long to be put right. That it was unravelled at all owes nothing to a sclerotic judicial system unable to come to terms with a cancer at its heart — in the form of falsified police evidence — and which right until the moment of their release treated the three prisoners with shabby contempt. It was only because of the devotion of family, solicitors and the investigative skills of Paul Foot that anything at all has happened after nearly 18 years. Without such efforts the Bridgewater Three (the fourth having already died in prison) would have been left to rot until they left jail unpardoned, their lives totally ruined by a crime they did not commit. They were not angels. Two were armed burglars; but murder is a crime apart, and that they did not do. Tory MPs who continue to bay for the return of the death penalty should ponder how many innocent people — the Guildford Four, the Birmingham Six and now the Bridgewater Three — might well have been executed by the state.

Everyone's thoughts will be filled with relief for those released — tinged with guilt because all of us in Britain are part of the public opinion that took far too long to be mobilised — coupled with redoubled sympathy for Carl Bridgewater's family. But that must not stop two vital steps being taken. First, there must a thorough independent investigation into what was alleged in court last week as "serious and substantial widespread police malpractice" reaching right to the top ranks. This must not be conducted — as John Major imprudently hinted — by the police themselves because it is they who are on trial. This is the latest in a series of acts of police criminality, yet how many, if any, police officers have been punished? Steps to avoid a repetition have already been taken, such as the Criminal Cases Review Commission, but this doesn't remove the need for the most thorough investigation into all aspects — including the role of Home Secretaries, the rules about disclosure of documents and the procedures for other cases of wrongful imprisonment deprived of the publicity this case has received. Some experts have urged a judicial review, but it would have to be done properly because the role and structure of the judiciary are also on trial.

The second vital step is to find the person or persons who did kill Carl Bridgewater. The Bridgewater Three case, along with the other notorious miscarriages of the 1970s, have fractured the reputation of Britain as a place where ordinary people can get a fair trial. The public needs to be reassured that police corruption is rare and will not be repeated. But it will be a long time before Britain's reputation for justice is restored. Finding the killer of Carl Bridgewater is the necessary first step.

The wrong kind of register

MINISTERS face an easy — and a difficult — decision on paedophiles. The easy decision is the need to block the proposed directory of paedophiles that a private publisher plans to produce in the UK. The entrepreneur has already produced directories in Australia and New Zealand by compiling a list of sex offenders with details of their crimes. This is too serious an issue to be left to a profit-seeking entrepreneur. There is a public interest argument for just such a public register, but it needs to be comprehensive, official and scrupulously correct. So should ministers allow public access to the national paedophile register that the Government is already committed to drawing up? That is the difficult decision facing the Home Secretary, Michael Howard.

The original intention of the register was to ensure that all organisations recruiting people who would be dealing with children did not employ anyone cautioned or convicted of child abuse. It was also there to help police investigations into suspect abuse by requiring all sex offenders to register their names and addresses every time they moved. But under pressure from opposition parties and local papers, ministers have agreed to examine whether access to the register should be widened to the public.

Yet the arguments remain unpersuasive. Letting a community know about a convicted paedophile living locally does not protect communities living further away. More seriously, it distorts the true picture of child abuse. Most child abuse is committed by people known to the child, not by strangers. Moreover, where communities have been warned of a paedophile living locally, usually by local papers, ugly vigilante protests have often followed. America, where the practice first began of informing neighbourhoods when local paedophiles were being released, is having second thoughts.

An open register runs counter to the criminal justice principle of allowing offenders, who have served their punishment, a new start. Chief constables and chief probation officers are opposed to the idea, and so is the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Most persuasive of all are the openly confessed doubts of Mr Howard. If even he is having doubts, public access to the register should be barred.

Europe poses a vital challenge for Labour

Hugo Young

WHAT the British Foreign Secretary has to say about the future of Europe is a matter of diminishing interest. He doesn't look as though he will be in the job much longer. Each time he speaks, he sounds a more sceptic note, but each time his audience can take comfort in the belief that he will soon be gone.

When he says, with casual indifference to the collective line, that the UK government is "hostile" to the single currency, he speaks no more than the obvious truth. But when he lectures Europe, as he did again in Germany last week, on the need to abandon any ideas for further integration, he is playing post-election politics, and becoming more distant from the world where real leaders have to make real decisions. In the circumstances, this seems an appropriate abdication.

Anyone concerned with the real world is looking, therefore, at the Labour party. Simultaneously with Malcolm Rifkind, the shadow chancellor, Gordon Brown, was putting out his own election line to New York business people. This was to the effect that if the Tories won, Britain would soon be leaving the European Union altogether.

There you have it. Rifkind's superstate versus Brown's exit. Each has its polemical merit as a reductionist horror to terrify the punters. But the question for Brown is much more interesting than that for Rifkind. All serious people should care more about how Labour will keep Britain at the centre of the EU than about how the Tories will take it out.

Hard though this is on the imagination, it's time to leap past the election, and re-enter the forgotten world where Europe, instead of being an arena in which the British do nothing but posture and threaten, resumes its place as a forum of vaguely rational decision-making. A government with a decent life expectancy can examine reality with more dispassion than the present lot has shown for the past five years.

Consider the single currency. The calculation is by no means simple. The economic argument is finely balanced, and the politics look hard. But that will always be the case. What no leader can overlook is the possibility that the currency will succeed, or the very real dangers that will accrue to Britain from opting out if it does succeed.

These dangers, moreover, are not as easily remediable as is sometimes assumed. Entering late is not a cost-free option. Remaining outside, though seeming to have prudence on its side, brings the certainty of reduced influence over a project that will exert a huge effect on the outs as well as the ins. Worse than that, it is not at all apparent how this putative change of mind would be effected, or when its endorsement by the voters could be most relied on. The scenario presumes delay, which means a referendum near the end of the next government's life, a time when no government would want to risk it.

One option, in face of this, is to bury the head in the sand and say the euro is bound to fail. But a national leader can't afford to indulge in such a convenient interment. This is one reason why a different scenario, in the event of a strong Labour victory at the election, is being debated in part of the shadow cabinet: namely, an early decision, with a referendum well before the Government has become unpopular, as it is bound to. This would be a gamble. Most seers recoil in horror at the very suggestion. Such is the lowering impact of Euroscepticism that it has come to seem almost grotesquely impractical.

But the alternative is appallingly stark: a situation in which the euro has become strong, the cost of staying out is great, distancing from the heart of the EU menaces the national interest, and a referendum has become impossible to hold.

This is why Brown's insistence on retaining a first-wave option is more cogent than Kenneth Clarke's. Clarke is doing it to preserve the position of his wing of the party, Brown to protect a policy his government has the capability of doing and maybe the desire as well.

Equally in need of grounding is the British attitude to the coming Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC). Last week Mr Rifkind carried himself further into the stratosphere of scepticism, seeking to prevail upon Germany to abandon every one of the fairly modest advances it has put on the table, and to insist on the British right to veto any proposition that Germany and others should move on their own. Leave aside argument about the different kinds of Europe the Tories and the Germans might prefer. Any idea that such a veto could stop Europe in its tracks, or co-exist with Britain's continuing presence on her own exclusive terms, is a flight of the wildest fantasy.

LABOUR'S urgent task will be to rescue the British position from such unreality. In the real world, it is now clear, there will be different degrees of integration, and the interest of all genuine Europeans lies in making that work. The IGC must be enabled to lay down a framework that can be vetoed by none but is as fair as possible to all. This may or may not rest on the premise that all members will eventually aspire to the federalistic attainments of an inner core.

But, as Andrew Duff shows in a learned and detailed report published last week, Reforming The Union (Sweet & Maxwell, £12.95), if the EU is to survive, let alone be successfully enlarged, agreed "differentiation" has become indispensable. It is at the heart of all future progress. It requires, among other things, a stronger Commission and Court to mediate the interests of all the members. The EU institutions will become the necessary agents of the national interests.

This kind of future will be hard work. Mr Rifkind said last week that Britain's purpose was to frustrate it. France, Germany and others are on notice that elements of further integration they desire must pass the British test. Britain knows best for them, it seems, as well as for the British. How seductive must they have found such condescension.

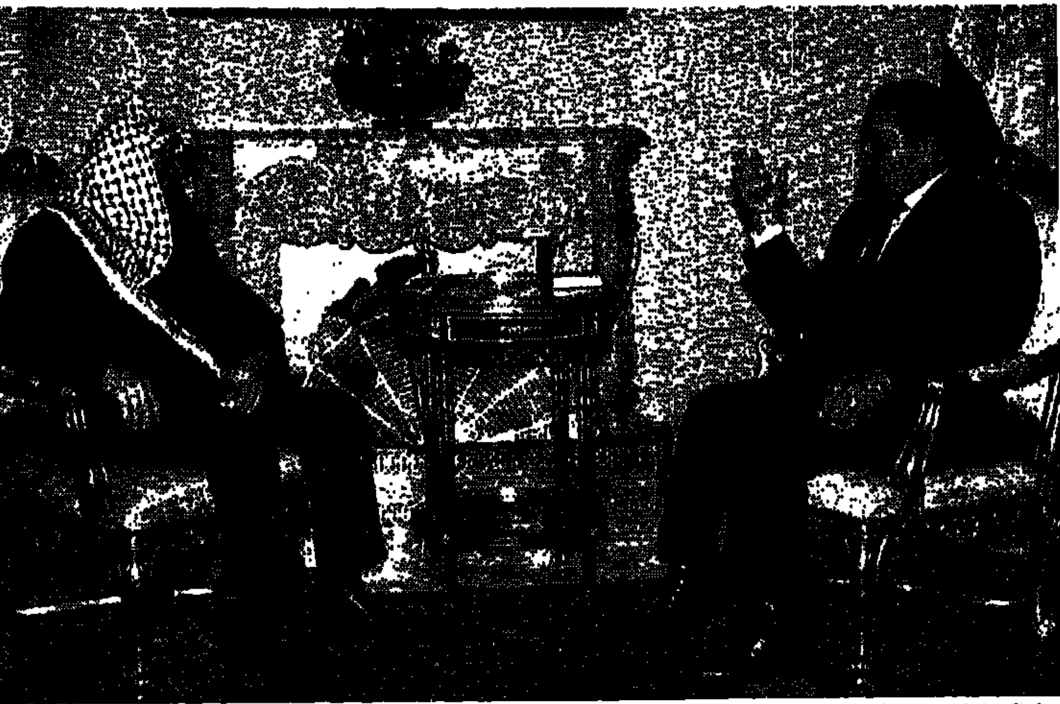
Labour's job will be to change the tone and the strategy, and it won't have much time. A role reversal beckons, from problem to solution. Mr Duff puts it well: "The new British government has an enormous responsibility to resolve what is now a major crisis of Europe."

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
March 2 1997

Le Monde

Egypt seeks to preserve its regional clout

Alexandre Buccianti and Gilles Paris in Cairo



Ringside seats . . . The Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, with Egypt's president Hosni Mubarak in Cairo last month, where they met to discuss the Middle East peace process PHOTO: MOHAMED EL-DAKHAKHNY

THE EGYPTIANS have every reason to be grateful to Binyamin Netanyahu. Within the space of a few months, his intransigence and his attempts to rewrite the Israeli-Palestinian peace accords have given a new style and substance to Egypt's foreign policy, which had lost some of its influence as a result of the gradual rapprochement between Israel and other Arab countries.

Much to the satisfaction of Egyptian public opinion, always quick to detect traces of a "Zionist plot" at every turn, the foreign minister, Amr Moussa, has recently made a string of forceful declarations.

While the Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, may seem to adopt a more measured approach, there is no fundamental divergence between the two men. Mubarak is equally opposed to Netanyahu's attempts to call into question the Oslo peace accords, knowing full well that this was an issue on which he succeeded in mustering the support of all the main Arab leaders (with the exception of Iraq's Saddam Hussein) at the Arab summit in Cairo last June, the first held since the Gulf war.

The limitations of that policy were illustrated when, after particularly difficult negotiations, an agreement was reached in January for the partial evacuation by Israeli forces from the Palestinian city of Hebron. The Egyptians had consistently argued in favour of taking a tough line against the Israelis, with the result that the leading role in clinching the deal was snatched from under their noses by King Hussein of Jordan, who, when talks seemed to have reached deadlock, stepped in to restart them.

Speaking to Le Monde, Moussa put his own gloss on events: "Thanks to Egypt, the Hebron accord was improved, even if it's not as good as it might have been. Everything will now depend on how it is applied, and on the coming Israeli withdrawals from the West Bank. If Israeli pressure had not been resisted last autumn, there would already be an intifada there."

Mohamed Sid Ahmed, a leader writer on the daily Al Ahram, disagrees with the foreign minister: "Egypt has been hamstrung by the contradiction between the requirements of its Middle Eastern policy and those of its domestic policy. If it decides that its priority should be the regional integration of its economy, it will find it has less diplomatic room for manoeuvre."

Salama Ahmad Salama, another leader writer on Al Ahram, thinks Mubarak devotes more of his time to foreign policy than to domestic policy. He believes a discreet campaign is being waged against Egypt by Israel and the United States. "They've been going around saying the Egyptian president is forcing [Yasser] Arafat to be more intransigent."

Egypt's tendency to be inflexible has affected relations between Cairo and Washington in the past. Moussa sidesteps the question of future relations with his US opposite number, Madeleine Albright, who, like him, is renowned for speaking her mind. "Since we're both said to be hawks, we're bound to be able to fly in formation," he says with a chuckle.

Salama cannot really see peace taking shape for "at least five years", a period during which Egypt will try to take advantage of its role, much cherished by Moussa, as "the justice of the peace of the Oslo accords".

According to one diplomat, "the Egyptians will certainly have a say in the West Bank pull-out, as well as in the status of the occupied territories and that of Jerusalem."

And after that? Ahmed thinks Egypt will be forced "to abandon an Arab policy in which it plays the leading role and adopt instead a regional policy in which its importance will be only relative". As regards its relations with Israel, Egypt will have moved from hostility to partnership — following the Camp David accords — to rivalry.

"Egypt is trying to find the right way forward but can't," he adds. "It cannot make either war or peace. In any negotiations, Israel has a virtual de facto right of veto, but Egypt doesn't. Israel has nuclear weapons, but Egypt hasn't."

Moussa rejects any suggestion that Cairo will play a less important regional role. "No one can rival Egypt, given the size of its population, its future economic clout and the long-standing role it has played in the Middle East."

Apart from the attention paid to Israel, the uncertain future of Sudan is causing Cairo considerable concern. "They no longer know what to do," says an Egyptian commentator. "They hate the regime in Khartoum, which they hold responsible for the present mess; yet the alternative represented by the opposition seems even more fraught with imponderables."

In January, after the offensive launched into the region of the Blue Nile by Sudanese opposition forces based in Eritrea and Ethiopia, the Egyptians somewhat hastily predicted the overthrow of the Khartoum regime — which they regard as having been involved in an attempt on Mubarak's life in 1995 and as serving as a base for Islamist terrorism, which is mercilessly combated in Egypt.

"The Sudanese regime has failed in every respect," says Moussa. "It has attracted the hostility of all its neighbours, caused all its opponents to flee the country, and proved incapable of settling the problem of secession in the south. It will have to change its ways. That remains unlikely, but nothing is impossible."

According to a Western diplomat, any gesture of goodwill from the Sudanese government would be welcomed by the Egyptians, who would be only too happy to see the situation there become more stable. Caught between a pair of unruly neighbours — Libya and Sudan — and an Israeli-Palestinian theatre of operations to which it does not hold all the keys, Egypt wants to go on playing a leading peace-making role in the Middle East.

Allowing for the omnipresence of the US and the Europeans' desire to play a more prominent role in the region, that policy may prove far from easy to implement.

(February 20)

The French conundrum over Nato

EDITORIAL

IN RECENT months, Franco-American relations seemed to amount to little more than a series of sometimes acrimonious public spats. The question everybody is asking, after the visit to Paris this week of the new United States secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, is whether there is any chance of a fresh start for that relationship.

The tone has undoubtedly changed. The French foreign minister, Hervé de Charette, who had to deal with several banana skins thrown in his path by Albright's predecessor, Warren Christopher, will no doubt feel particularly relieved at his new opposite number's friendly demeanour. That said, there is nothing to suggest that fundamental differences between Washington and Paris are likely to be resolved.

The most important difference has to do with the reform of Nato. France has called for a "genuine sharing of responsibilities" between Europe and the US, and has made it a condition for its continued reintegration into Nato's military structures.

The French desire to see a European replace the American currently in charge of Nato's southern command remains a bone of contention. But Paris says that if no agreement is reached before Nato's Madrid summit in July, it will not make this a sticking point with the US. Given the degree of American resistance to the idea, the French now seem to be bracing themselves for failure.

The question is: who has the more to lose? Paris emphasises the discredit such a course would bring on Washington, pointing out that the Germans and Italians sided with the French for the first time in Nato's history, and that the British almost came round to the same view.

By refusing to make any concessions the US would, the argument goes, provide proof of its inability to share leadership, even in the Mediterranean — the region that has become the most strategically sensitive for Europe since the end of the cold war.

But even if the "Europeanisation" of Nato proved impossible, that would not necessarily mean an autonomous European defence system would have any better chance of seeing the light of day. The latter, except in the field of military observation, remains a pipe dream. And it is difficult to imagine the Europeans intervening militarily outside the framework of Nato.

France has made it clear it has no intention of backtracking on its reintegration into Nato's military structures. It has logic on its side — a logic which, in the long run, and once the US finally agrees to a reform of Nato, will probably prevail. But in the short term any setback in Madrid will ultimately be a setback for France.

(February 19)

Italy sets an example on immigration

EDITORIAL

THE CENTRE-LEFT coalition in Italy, led by prime minister Romano Prodi, is sailing full steam ahead towards European integration. Prodi has pledged to carry out a reform of government finances to enable Italy to become one of the first countries to adopt the euro.

Italy was furious at being excluded from the Schengen accords (which provide for the lifting of border controls between certain European Union members) on the grounds that the policing of its coastline was ineffective.

The Prodi government, therefore, resolved to meet the necessary conditions for entering the "Schengen space" as quickly as possible. Under the impetus of the interior minister, Giorgio Napolitano, a former reformist communist leader, it has just taken several steps in that direction.

It has legalised the situation of some 230,000 foreigners whose presence on Italian soil had not been authorised. The aim was to clear the decks for a bill, adopted on February 14, that aims to put immigration on a better organised basis. The bill strikes a balance between liberal legislation, which will make it possible to control the influx of immigrants and to ease their integration, and stricter measures against illegal immigrants.

It provides for the possibility that any foreigner who has lived officially in Italy for six years may vote in local elections and become a councillor (though not a mayor).

Italy's opposition National Alliance, made up of former neo-fascists from the Italian Social Movement (MSI), and Umberto Bossi's Northern League have protested against the bill. But on the whole it has been welcomed.

The tone of debate and the direction in which the Italian government has decided to forge ahead contrast greatly with the way France is moving as it comes under ideological pressure from the National Front.

But it remains to be seen if the Italians will be able to implement this policy. The control of migratory flows and the application of new rules on the deportation of illegals will not be possible unless the bureaucracy is reformed and the police are made more efficient.

And it should be remembered that blanket regularisation of illegal immigrants does not necessarily solve the problem, as can be seen from what happened in France in 1981 and 1982, and more recently in Spain.

The Prodi government's efforts to solve in a generous way what has become one of Europe's most intractable problems are for that reason all the more commendable.

(February 16-17)

Better days still elude SA township

Frédéric Chambon in Cape Town

THE chauffeur knows the address by heart now. Every morning he parks his Mercedes in front of 34 Lee Bozalek Street, a "house" ingeniously put together with old planks and pieces of corrugated iron.

Impeccably dressed in a suit and tie, Arthur Jacobs emerges, leaps into the air-conditioned limo and speeds off towards the centre of Cape Town, South Africa's third-largest city. Half an hour later, the deputy mayor of the city — for it is he — is ensconced in his very grand office, which is almost as big as his shack in the township of KTC (Kakaza Trading Centre).

Ever since the local elections of May 1996, Jacobs, an activist in the African National Congress (ANC), has preferred to go on living in the midst of his voters despite the social advancement that has come with his new political office.

"It's still the best way not to forget the needs of the people who elected you," Jacobs says. At a time when the slowness of change in the black townships is beginning to create disgruntlement with the ANC, the recently elected deputy mayor is determined to remain tuned in to the concerns of his electorate.

KTC is still waiting for the effects of the "new" South Africa to filter through. The connection to the electricity supply in 1995 is the only major change to have taken place there since Nelson Mandela came to power in 1994. The living conditions of its 15,000 inhabitants, who occupy a plot of land on the edge of Cape Town's airport, have gradually improved over the years. But some of them still do not have the benefit of the running water and drains that began to be installed in 1993.

As is the case elsewhere in South Africa, the building of new homes has fallen seriously behind schedule and is the main reason for mounting discontent. Two forlorn "pilot" homes, unanimously declared to be too small, are the only sign of the government's future plans for the township.

Some KTC inhabitants have decided to adopt a pragmatic attitude. "If we rely on the government, we could go on waiting till we die," says Cyril Manyamalala, aged 50, an unemployed family man who is president of an association recently set up to collect money for the construction of adequate housing in the township.

Like most black South Africans, Manyamalala remains sympathetic to the ANC and finds it difficult to criticise the organisation that for years represented the hopes of an oppressed people.

He tries to remain positive, but disappointment shows through: "We voted for Nelson Mandela. There's no point now in spending all our time blaming him. We must take matters into our own hands."

(February 13)

'Some Algerians are profiting from the war'

Gilles Kepel, a leading French expert on the Arab world talks to **Dominique Dhombres**

WHAT is your analysis of the present situation in Algeria?

This year's Ramadan has been the bloodiest since the cancellation of the electoral process in Algeria in January 1992. It has plunged the Algerian people into a state of utter despair. But we should also remember that if the civil war is dragging on it's because there are now a number of political and social players in Algeria who have every interest in its continuation. There are also losers. It's important to pinpoint who falls into either category.

Who has an interest in the war continuing?

The war cannot be simply ascribed to ideological antagonism between the Islamists and the military regime. Today almost the only resource Algeria has is oil. Oil revenues bring in an enormous amount of money. Oil prices recently increased and the dollar has firmed up against European currencies — and most of Algeria's imports come from Europe.

Is the oil industry entirely in the hands of the government?

Some ideologues in the military regime draw a distinction — much like the French who wanted to hang on to the Sahara at the end of the colonial era — between the useful part of Algeria and the rest of the country.

The useful part of Algeria is the Sahara, with its oil wells. Today it has become an exclusion zone which you can enter only if you have a special pass, and which provides those who run Algeria with an extraordinary source of income.

That income is then channelled into a banking and financial system which, like the oil industry, is nationalised and therefore totally controlled by those who hold the reins of political power in Algeria.

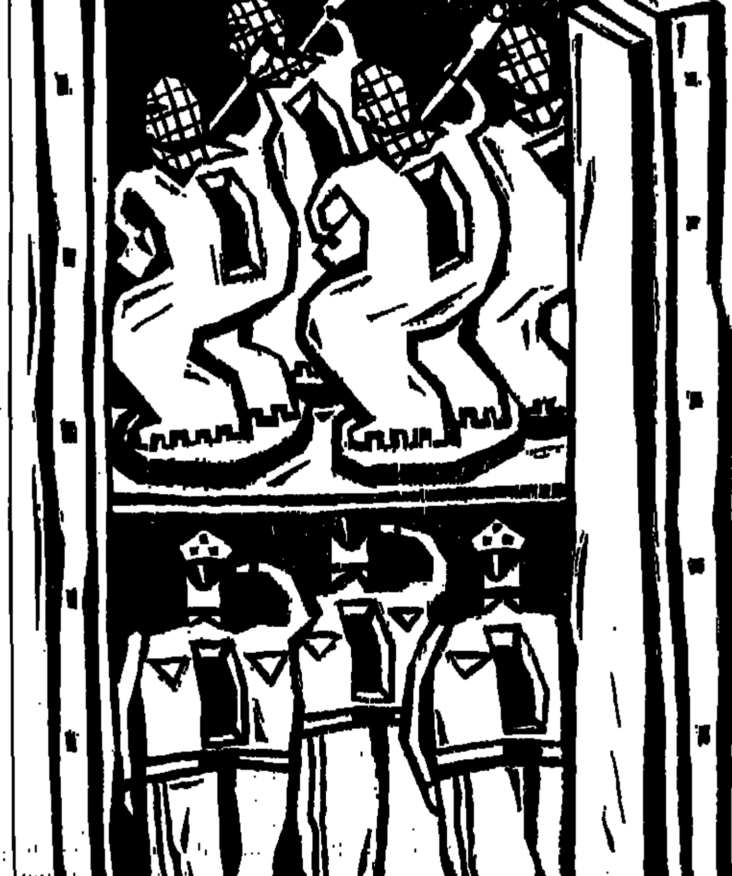
If a company wants, say, to obtain a letter of credit so it can import goods, it will find things much easier if it has connections in the military nomenklatura. This or that general can then impress on the bank that it would be a good idea for it to grant the company the credit it needs to import consumer goods. The system is jokingly referred to in Algeria not as "import-export", but as "import-import".

How does the war economy work?

Some of the greatest beneficiaries of the civil war have been those who have directly opted for violence. In 1993-94, a number of areas in the Algiers region, on the outskirts of large cities and in the interior began to slip from the army's control.

It was in such areas that the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), and other similarly radical groups began to exercise power. They attacked rivals in other districts, or robbed banks. A whole war economy came into being that way.

To deal with the armed groups that were resorting to extortion, self-defence groups were formed. These were armed by the government. What ensued was a kind of privatisation of the practice of state violence. The self-defence groups were, in theory, under the control of the local authorities, but they soon started operating fairly independently. They now play quite a considerable role in the system of depredation.



An Algerian friend of mine told me that some young people from his district came to see him two years ago. They said: "You've got children. It would be a pity if something happened to them on their way to school." That meant he had to pay up.

A whole system of extortion sprang up in that way. My friend now tells me that some of those very same youngsters have joined the self-defence groups and even the plain-clothes police department. Taking up arms has become one of the ways Algerians can survive, and sometimes even make their fortune. The groups that are making money out of the war have every interest in its continuation.

Have huge fortunes been made from arms trafficking?

The biggest fortunes have been made from the control of imports and, indirectly, from oil revenues. Unlike what happened in the former Yugoslavia, only small amounts of arms have been supplied from outside. Most weapons come from the Algerian army's stocks. The guerrillas do not have the kind of fire power that could seriously threaten the regime.

How do you explain the murder, on January 28, of Abdelhaq Benhamouda, general secretary of the country's main trade union organisation, the General Union of Algerian Workers (Ugta)?

It's very hard to say who killed him. Benhamouda was a former primary schoolteacher, a trade union leader who was part of the National Liberation Front (FLN) system, and a fierce enemy of the Islamists.

But above all he had the backing of the genuine rank and file — public sector workers, teachers, council employees, nurses and others — who to my mind are the group that have been hardest hit by the present situation because they have neither weapons nor "connections".

Benhamouda represented a social group which has every interest in a solution being found that will enable the country to escape the spiral of violence. He also played an active part in President Zeroual's strategy of trying to create a political rank and file during the run-up to the general election, due to be held at the end of May.

The FLN can no longer play the role of a presidential party — it has been too thoroughly discredited. The advantage of the Ugta is that it is already a well-structured organisation, and one that could be turned into a political party. So Benhamouda was a thorn in the flesh of all those who want to see a continuation of the war economy . . . the armed Islamist groups [and] elements within the military nomenklatura.

How do you think the general election will go?

In terms of *realpolitik*, the point at issue is whether the top military brass — the "200 families" who now control the oil revenue system — are prepared to share their gains with other social groups. The latter include what one might call the Islamist bourgeoisie, which is currently represented by Mahfoud Nahnah's Hamas Party — and possibly by Abassi Madani, if he is released from prison.

If the Islamists were allowed to stand in the May elections, do you think they would win again, as they did in 1991?

A few months after being formed in 1989, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) succeeded in becoming a huge party that cast its net extremely wide. As a result, the great mass of urban have-nots, for whom the application of Islamic law, *sharia*, was invested with revolutionary significance, teamed up with what one might call the "intellectual counter-élites" — young people of good education, sometimes foreign-trained, who were unable to exercise their skills or powers because Algeria's economic and political system remained in the hands of the FLN's military nomenklatura.

There was a third component of the FIS, the devout bourgeoisie which consisted of shopkeepers, small businessmen and former country landowners whose property had been nationalised.

The first of these three components gave the movement its impetus, the second its ideologues, and the third its finance.

But there was no way that this alliance could transform the FIS's election successes into a takeover of power once its more virulent leaders, such as Ali Benhadj, had started directing their barbs not only against the regime but against the French-speaking middle classes.

Those middle classes felt that if the FIS won they would become the expiatory victims of an Islamic state. They therefore failed to respond, when the regime cancelled the second round of the elections in January 1992.

Later on, as the civil war took hold, the devout bourgeoisie that was smarting from the effects of GIA terrorism began to drift away from the Islamist camp as personified by the FIS. The latter is no longer the all-embracing party it was in 1991.

After five years of civil war, I'd be surprised if the Islamists were able to rebuild a coalition on that scale and win the election hands down — always supposing they were allowed to stand.

(February 11)

Gilles Kepel is professor at the Institute of Political Studies in Paris and author of Le Revanche de Dieu (The Revenge of God, Polity Press)

Can China's New Leader Call the Tune?

Steven Mufson in Beijing

DURING his days as Shanghai's mayor, Jiang Zemin danced with San Francisco's then-Mayor Dianne Feinstein and sang "When We Were Young." He performed Beijing opera at get-togethers of Shanghai residents. And on a trip to a computer company developing a digital piano, he banged out a well-known graduation tune.

The musical Jiang is still at it. During a break from a recent meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Conference, he teamed up with Philippine President Fidel Ramos for a rendition of Elvis Presley's "Love Me Tender."

Now, as China's leader, Jiang will have to prove himself as versatile politically as he is musically. Without his political patron, the late Deng Xiaoping, Jiang will need to play a tune that will inspire the confidence of the Chinese people while he dances his way among rival factions of the Communist Party and tries to lead a fast-growing China to a place as a world power.

It remains to be seen whether he is up to the job. Jiang, 70, already has outlived the forecasts of many of his detractors who thought he would share the fate of Deng's two earlier designated successors who were shunted aside. "Jiang's Tenure Seen as Temporary," said a Washington Post headline in 1989. In nearly eight years as general secretary of the Communist Party, Jiang has held that post longer than all but one Chinese official: the Great Helmsman himself, Mao Zedong.

But the death of Deng leaves tough challenges for Jiang. Over the next year he faces a potentially messy transition in Hong Kong, delicate summit meetings with President Clinton and a crucial Communist Party Congress in the fall that could turn into a major political battleground.

Few see him as following the tradition of strong Chinese leaders. The affable Jiang, a lifelong "apparatchik," lacks the authority of Deng, who risked his life for the revolution and made the Long March with Mao in 1934-35 that enabled Communists to regroup and defeat the rival Nationalists in 1949. While Deng was one of the top half-dozen leaders of China in the 1950s and 1960s, Jiang was plodding through the Communist Party bureaucracy.



Weather vane . . . It remains unclear where Jiang Zemin's true convictions lie — or whether he has any PHOTOGRAPH: ENRIC MARTI

Now that Deng has left the stage, who is the real Jiang? It remains unclear where Jiang's true convictions lie — or whether he has any.

Over the past eight years, he has tried to be all things to all people, singing from different sheets for different audiences. At times he has sounded like a Maoist-era leftist, at times like a thoroughly modern follower of the pragmatic Deng. He has wooed the powerful military and nodded toward some Communist Party liberals.

His government has condemned the U.S. government and lamented the invasion of American culture, products and cartoons. Yet Jiang has sent two sons to college in the United States.

In January last year, Jiang donned a gray, two-piece suit of the style popularized by Mao and delivered a speech to provincial Communist Party propaganda department heads. He declared that "we cannot sacrifice culture and ideology merely for a short period of economic development."

The message seemed the exact opposite of Deng's strategy and suggested Jiang was swerving from Deng's economic pragmatism. But on other occasions, including his first official meeting after Deng's death last week, Jiang has worn a western-style business suit and vowed to pursue the open-door and economic modernization programs of Deng. As president, he has hosted a steady stream of foreign business executives while playing down ideology and promising stable and increasingly open markets.

Jiang also has sent confusing signals when it comes to political issues. He made a subtle gesture to China's liberals by visiting the grave of the late reformist leader Hu Yaobang during the traditional Chinese tomb-sweeping holiday in April 1994 and by visiting Hu's widow last year. It was Hu's funeral that became the catalyst for the 1989 student rebellions that Deng crushed. And under Jiang's watch, some liberal magazines from earlier years have been allowed to re-emerge.

But Jiang also has crushed China's dissident community, with hardly one left free in the country.

His personal history is varied enough to provide few definitive clues to his beliefs. The son of intellectuals who lived in Yangzhou, north of Shanghai, Jiang went to an American missionary school, where he learned to speak English. He can quote parts of the Gettysburg Address and spoke to Queen Elizabeth without an interpreter when she visited Shanghai in 1986. He acquired a taste for foreign music and foreign movies of the 1940s.

He joined the Communist Party in 1946 during the civil war; once, when Nationalist soldiers came to his college looking for Communists, Jiang escaped in the trunk of the principal's car.

Trained as an electrical engineer in the late 1940s, he graduated from university in Shanghai. He worked in several Shanghai light industrial factories after the Communists seized power in 1949. He trained in Eastern Europe and also worked in the Stalin Automobile Plant in Moscow in 1955-56, where he learned to speak Russian. He returned to various posts in state-owned enterprises in Shanghai and Wuhan.

It is unclear what happened to him during the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution, when Deng was stripped of his party posts and humiliated in public. But in 1982, Jiang was appointed a member of the party's Central Committee. He headed the Ministry of Electronics Industry for a short time. Then in 1985, he was appointed mayor of Shanghai. Many residents became unhappy that he didn't do more to ease pressing problems of traffic, pollution and housing. He acquired the nickname "the Flower Pot," because he managed to look good without doing anything.

But as mayor and later as Shanghai party chief, Jiang sought foreign investment for the city and buttressed its reputation for looking outward for economic development.

Some people call Jiang a political weather vane, in part because of his actions during the tumultuous student demonstrations of 1989. In the late 1980s, for example, he defended the editors of the outspoken World Economic Herald against conservative attacks while the relatively liberal Zhao Ziyang was in power. A few months later, with Zhao under political siege, Jiang switched sides. On April 26, 1989, the day after Deng denounced pro-democracy demonstrators, Jiang dismissed the editor in chief of the paper and shut it down the next month.

Although Jiang did not use troops in Shanghai in June 1989, when the government cracked down on the students, three protest leaders were executed afterward. The student-led demonstrations in 1989 catapulted Jiang to national leadership. Because he and Zhu had dispersed demonstrators without having troops open fire, Jiang's reputation was not tarnished. Deng saw his lack of political identity as an asset for leading a deeply divided party.

As Communist Party boss, Jiang began to lean toward party leftists in 1991. But in 1992, he veered back toward economic reformers. By that year, the imperial Deng had bestowed upon Jiang the country's three most important titles: Communist Party general secretary, and president and chairman of the Central Military Commission.

The military is perhaps trickiest for Jiang to win over. Mao taught that "power comes from the barrel of a gun," but he also said the military should be subservient to the party. Jiang's ascendance marked the first time that a person without military experience had overseen the army.

But he has attempted to curry favor with the military by giving it large budget increases and by letting it shop abroad for sophisticated military equipment. He has rotated or replaced every regional commander and installed two of his own choices as vice chairmen of the central military commission.

Stability at the Heart of Europe

EDITORIAL

MADELEINE ALBRIGHT'S first trip to Moscow as secretary of state inevitably drew her into the grand negotiations on the sharpest issue currently besetting U.S.-Russian relations — NATO enlargement. She found the expected deep official hostility to the idea, but she also found — as her Russian counterpart, Yevgeny Primakov, put it — a determination to minimize the complications if the project succeeds. It was enough to let her claim "important progress," though there is still a long and uncertain way to go.

The Russians have half a point in their opposition to seeing NATO start enlisting Central European states that the Kremlin formerly ruled. The alliance is in fact moving closer to, though not adjacent to, Russia's borders, the Kaliningrad enclave excepted. It is not entirely foolish of an earlier-invaded state, one currently floating at a historical ebb of power, to want to make sure its security and political interests are not being disserved.

But this is not all that difficult a demonstration for NATO to make in the current circumstances. There is the visible overall scheme of an East-West confrontation dissolved and a continent now thoroughly ventilated by the winds of peace. There is the trivial and still-declining level of armaments and battle capacity — and other issues to push and shove over — on both sides of the old divide. There is NATO's energetic and still-unfolding program to calm Russian anxieties by proposals to further limit the locations and numbers of conventional as well as nuclear arms, by new measures of regional consultation and co-operation between NATO and Moscow — as in the successful ongoing case of Bosnia — and by expanded deference to a much-distracted Russia's attempts to retain a place of sovereign equality at the global table.

The details of all these things are the subject of much noisy pulling and hauling. Their common thrust is to offer Russia a relationship with the West that is closer, deeper, safer and more valuable than it has ever known. This is what the more nit-picking critics of NATO enlargement in the West, and the more nationalistic critics in the East, often ignore.

In fact, the official Russian response to the NATO program is wildly overdrawn. It is misleading to say, as do the foes of expansion, that this program would draw a provocative new line through Europe. The alliance is trying to move eastward an already existing line that creates two classes of democracies, one sheltered by NATO and the other left exposed to psychological and political buffeting from the East.

The new line that would result would still leave some democracies unsheltered. But it in no way poses anything that could be faintly called a threat to Russia. On the contrary, an expanded alliance narrows the zone of instability between Russia and Germany that is a historical and dangerous feature of European politics. It is to the general advantage, including Russia's advantage, to continue reducing this zone.

The polls appear to say that most Russians could not care less about NATO expansion. It is an issue of contention principally among the political elite. That doesn't mean the West should plunge along heedlessly: It cannot ignore irresponsible taunts from Moscow to the effect that Washington is pushing Russia toward "an aggressive confrontation." It must be sensitive to the very real currents of nationalism at play. But there should be no edging back on the part of the West from its careful pursuit of a sound policy that looks to stability and democratic growth in the heart of Europe.

Mexico Sacks Its Anti-Drugs Czar

John Ward Anderson in Mexico City

THE MEXICAN government fired the country's highest ranking anti-drug official last week after 10 weeks on the job, alleging that he had provided protection for one of the country's drug kingpins in exchange for money and other bribes.

The dismissal of army Gen. Jesus Gutierrez Rebollo — a career officer who was named director of the National Institute to Combat Drugs specifically to weed out corruption — represents yet another blow to Mexico's long-troubled anti-drug campaign. Moreover, it comes just two weeks before President Clinton is to certify whether Mexico is a reliable ally in the joint war on drug trafficking. Decertification would trigger U.S. economic sanctions against Mexico, its southern partner in the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Mexican Defense Secretary Enrique Cervantes Aguirre said in a statement issued last week that an investigation into Gutierrez's activities began on February 6, after authorities received a tip that the new drug czar had moved into an expensive apartment in Mexico City whose cost seemed beyond his lawful means.

Cervantes said an investigation revealed that the apartment was made available to Gutierrez by an employee of Amado Carrillo Fuentes, the purported leader of the Mexico's Juarez drug cartel, who is regarded in law enforcement circles as the country's most powerful drug lord.

In addition, a senior U.S. law enforcement official disclosed that Mexican authorities also had obtained a recording of a telephone conversation between Gutierrez and Carrillo Fuentes, during which the two men allegedly discussed payments to be made to Gutierrez in exchange for his turning a blind eye to Carrillo Fuentes's narcotics business.

Carrillo Fuentes is widely known here as "The Lord of the Skies" because he is said to have pioneered the use of Boeing 727 aircraft to transport bulk shipments of as much as 15 tons of cocaine from Colombia to northern Mexico, whence it is transshipped to the United States by various means. Mexican authorities say his drug operation grosses an estimated $200 million a week and that his underworld organization may be responsible for as many as 400 killings.

Gutierrez, 62, a 42-year army veteran, was selected to head the anti-drug institute — the Mexican equivalent to the U.S Drug Enforcement Administration — because of his long-standing reputation for honesty and incorruptibility.

Cervantes said in his statement that Gutierrez has now been charged with facilitating the transportation of cocaine, bribery and maladministration of justice. In outlining the charges against Gutierrez — who has been hospitalized for more than a week after apparently suffering a heart attack — the defense secretary alleged that Gutierrez had brought criminals with drug contacts into the anti-drug agency, including high-ranking officials who are also said to be under investigation.

The Gutierrez probe became public when army troops assigned to anti-drug duty raided three homes Gutierrez owns in the west-central city of Guadalajara. The operation was carried out without the knowledge or cooperation of Gutierrez's agency or the attorney general's office, which oversees the anti-drug institute.



President Zedillo speaks to members of the armed forces in Mexico City on Army Day last week, a day after he sacked General Gutierrez from his post as the country's top anti-drugs official PHOTO: DARIO LOPEZ-MILLS

Indeed, President Ernesto Zedillo has called on the army to play a larger role in the country's war on drugs because of widespread corruption in Mexican law enforcement agencies, and some of the most successful recent anti-narcotics operations here have been carried out by specially trained troops.

The Gutierrez episode is but the latest example of the broad reach of drug money within the Mexican government. The Mexican magazine Proceso recently published what it said were U.S. court documents asserting that Raul Salinas, brother of former president Carlos Salinas, had offered protection in exchange for money to drug cartel leader Juan Garcia Abrego, who is now serving 11 life sentences in the United States on trafficking charges. The Salinases have denied the allegations.

But despite years of drug-linked corruption revelations here, some U.S. anti-drug officials had gone to great lengths to praise their Mexican counterparts and encourage them to take a stronger stand against drug dealers.

"General Gutierrez Rebollo has a . . . reputation of being an honest man . . . who has now been sent to bring to the Mexican police the same kind of aggressiveness and reputation he had in uniform," Barry McCaffrey, director of the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy, said when Gutierrez visited Washington last month.

Last week, a spokesman for McCaffrey said: "This is very bad news, disappointing, to find out that corruption — as bad as we knew it was — has actually reached this high a level in the Mexican government."

Meanwhile police in northern Mexico's drug- and violence-infested state of Baja California Norte have been replaced with soldiers, a tacit recognition that civilian police there cannot be trusted to combat drug trafficking because of extensive corruption.

Jose Luis Chavez, a military judge serving as head of the federal attorney general's office in Baja California Norte, which includes Tijuana, said the changes were made because soldiers "make a better force against narco-trafficking and crime. I think military personnel will be more useful in this type of activity."

Tijuana, the state's main city, is just south of San Diego and is home to the Tijuana Cartel. A ruthless drug mafia run by four Arellano Felix brothers, the cartel moves a large portion of Mexico's U.S.-bound cocaine and other illegal drugs across the border.

Blast 'May Have Link to Atlanta Bomb'

Stephen Barr in Atlanta

A BOMB exploded at a popular gay and lesbian nightclub here on Friday last week in an attack that officials said is strikingly similar to one against a suburban abortion clinic in mid-January and has some of the same characteristics as the Centennial Park bombing during last summer's Olympics.

Federal law enforcement officials said they fear a sadistic serial bomber may be responsible for the terrorist assaults.

The explosion at the Otherside Lounge in the Piedmont Road neighborhood spewed large nails into the crowded club, injuring at least four people and sending more than 100 patrons scrambling to escape, officials said.

Police found a second bomb in the club's parking lot. That bomb was detonated by police early the next morning.

Law enforcement officials familiar with both the nightclub attack and the abortion clinic assault in January said there were chilling similarities in the both the devices and the circumstances of the terrorist attacks.

The two devices found at the club at first glance appeared "nearly identical" to the two bombs that blew up outside the clinic, officials said.

In both attacks, high explosives — most likely dynamite — were used. In each instance, two bombs were placed. In both assaults, the bombs were deployed similarly, with one bomb placed near potential victims inside the targeted establishment and the other outside the building.

Law enforcement officials think the second bombs may have been aimed at maiming or killing the rescue workers and police officers. Most of the seven people injured at the abortion clinic were law enforcement and rescue workers.

"I can't rule out that the events of Friday night are the result of copy-cat work, but we have to look at the possibility of a serial bomber," said John Killorin, special agent in charge of the Atlanta field office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

Sources familiar with the probes into the Olympic and abortion clinic attacks said a primary theory investigators are using centers around the assailant or assailants being influenced by extremist philosophies.

The nightclub's patrons said they saw a flash, then heard an explosion that sounded like an electrical transformer blowing up. People were seen fleeing with nails sticking out of their arms. Only one person, a woman, required hospitalization, however. FBI and ATF agents are investigating the attack.

Last July, a crude pipe bomb, built with a simple clock and low-grade explosive powder, sprayed deadly shrapnel into a crowd at Centennial Olympic Park. The shrapnel included masonry nails placed in a plastic food container. The bomb and the nails were inside a backpack. The explosion killed one person and injured 100 others. A Turkish television cameraman died of a heart attack.

The attack bears some similarities to the Centennial Park Olympic assault, authorities said. Shrapnel was used in both attacks. And in the lounge assault, one of the bombs was placed in a backpack.

But there also are stark differences between the Olympic bombing and the recent attacks. There was a single device in the the Olympic assault, and it was a low-grade pipe-bomb type. High explosives were used in the other attacks. In addition, the Olympic park bombing was preceded by a warning call. The clinic and nightclub bombings came without warning.

Torture Manual Error

Walter Pincus

THE PENTAGON'S inspector general said last week that repeated mistakes were made in the 1980s that caused descriptions of "objectionable" actions such as execution and torture to be included in U.S. Army manuals used to teach counter-intelligence techniques to Latin American military personnel before 1991.

But assistant inspector general Russell A. Rau said his four-month inquiry found "no deliberate and orchestrated attempt was made to violate Defense Department or U.S. Army policies" and that "further investigation to assess individual responsibility is not required."

The IG investigation was undertaken in September after questions were raised about a 1992 Pentagon inquiry into how discussion of such things as "motivation by fear, payment of bounties for enemy dead, false imprisonment and the use of truth serum" were introduced and retained in Spanish-language training materials. The materials were used in the U.S. Southern Command area and particularly at its School of the Americas, which trains officers and enlisted men from Central and South America.

Former defense secretary William Perry last year asked the inspector general to review a 1992 decision by the department not to pursue individual responsibility in the scandal.

"The inspector general investigation concludes that the department acted appropriately in 1992 to stop the use of improper materials in training foreign military officers," Deputy Defense Secretary John White said last week.

Rep. Joseph Kennedy II, D-Massachusetts, who has been calling for closure of the School of the Americas, said that the Pentagon had taken "an important first step toward establishing accountability." But, he added, "the torture manuals . . . were one piece of the larger problem . . . the message from the upper echelons of power that rules don't matter."

The Army School of the Americas, long located in Panama but moved in 1984 to Fort Benning, Georgia, has trained nearly 60,000 military and police officers from Latin America and the United States since 1946.

The Latin America working group project of the National Council of Churches, which has taken a leading role in publicizing existence of the manuals, last week questioned whether current training materials for teaching Latin Americans have been "thoroughly reviewed and revised."

Child Rape Reaches Epidemic Scale

Lynne Duke in Orange Farm

IN THIS struggling community 25 miles south of Johannesburg, children have become prey. A 15-year-old tells a local physician she is not sure of her parentage. She wonders if the man who says he is her father is telling the truth, "'because every day he would come and climb on top of me and then beat me,'" said Dumiso Zulu, the doctor, recounting the girl's words.

A mother refuses to consider that the likely suspect responsible for the anal sores found on her 21-month-old baby is the child's father. "You just become disturbed for the day if you see such a case," says Verina Sithole, a nurse.

A 12-year-old girl runs home crying one day after a seemingly nice neighborhood man invites her to visit him. It was a chillingly familiar scenario, reminiscent of the three months of abuse she endured two years ago when a local clergyman lured her with kindness and spare change, then repeatedly raped her and secured her silence with threats to kill her mother.

Child rape — and rape in general — has emerged as the new South Africa's ugly secret, perhaps the most alarming aspect of a nationwide explosion of crime.

Throughout South Africa, reported cases of child rape have increased dramatically in recent years, from 7,559 in 1994, to 10,037 in 1995, to 13,859 in 1996, according to national police statistics.

Overall, the country may have the highest rate of reported rape in the world, police say. Based on total rape figures for the first eight months of 1996, South Africa's rate of 141 reported rapes per 100,000 females is almost double the U.S. rate for 1995 of 72 rapes per 100,000 females, according to law enforcement statistics from both countries. Child rapes account for about 38 percent of South Africa's total rape caseload.

Unlike their counterparts in the United States, where statisticians believe about 50 percent of rapes are reported, child abuse and law enforcement officials here believe only a small portion of the total incidents ever are reported, owing partly to poor record keeping and the bureaucratic chaos caused when South Africa made the transition from white-minority rule to democracy in 1994.

"I would go so far as to say there's a war against women and children, a low-intensity war," said Marilyn Donaldson, a clinical psychologist in the Johannesburg area who counsels rape victims and some rapists. "It just seems like children are bearing the brunt of the insecurity of our transition."

Social workers attribute the rape crisis to social and family upheavals dating at least to the era of apartheid and intensified by the changes that took place when it ended in 1994.

Rape, as well as most other crimes, also is fueled by criminals' belief that law enforcement cannot — or will not — do much to stop them, social scientists say.

Combating the problem will prove most difficult in places like Orange Farm, an impoverished community of roughly 300,000 people. The residents live mostly in overcrowded shacks along dirt roads, where blazingly beautiful flower beds and tiny but well-tended lawns suggest a community striving to nurture normalcy amid chaos. But the new government's promises of democracy, safety and development have been hard to fulfill in the face of this community's vast social needs.

Here as elsewhere, women and children are flooding medical and trauma clinics with chilling reports of rape. Police have proven unable to cope with the avalanche of cases; child protection officers just set up shop here last month. The two nurses who serve 55 schools in the Orange Farm region are burdened with the heart-rending evidence of abuse, such as children soiling themselves in class. Some mothers have become so suspicious and frightened that they won't leave their men alone with the children at all.

If anything positive has emerged from the rape epidemic, it is that women are no longer silent: They are going to police, to clinics, to the streets, to the news media.

In Orange Farm, foreign funding enabled residents to open a shelter for rape victims in December. But a month after it opened, a man raped a 19-year-old woman at the shelter while an accomplice tried to rape the 14-year-old daughter of the shelter manager. The rapist was charged but released on bail.

Ellen Mooi, the manager, generally counsels against vigilante violence. A pensioner turned child welfare advocate, she believes it is wrong to burn or beat people to death, as happened in a squatter camp recently to a man who raped a toddler. But Mooi is growing fed up with the prevalence of rape and the leniency with which rapists are treated. "If the women killed about two or three perpetrators, the government will wake up and say 'Okay. No bail for rapists,'" Mooi said.

What South Africa is experiencing, social scientists say, are the effects of profound social upheaval, combined with deep poverty, which has left men feeling frustrated and socially impotent, driven to find outlets for the exercise of power. The problem flourishes in the squalid black squatter camps where homelessness, hopelessness and social chaos have bred degrading conduct. It occurs in white homes as well, fueled by a violent culture as well as alcohol abuse, analysts say.

In addition, a strong traditional African culture in which children are taught to respect all elders, even strangers, leaves them easy prey for adults with harmful designs. Some recent rapes also have been prompted by a folk tale that HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, can be cured through sex with a virginal child.

Some experts say the child rape problem predates South Africa's transition to democracy. But it was largely hidden by families ashamed of the stigma or who knew that the apartheid-era police devoted more energy to political repression than to fighting crime.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Washington Post critics review three new works of fiction which show the art of the modern American storyteller

Surfing Deep Water

James Hynes

THE DOGS OF WINTER
By Kem Nunn
Scribner. 363pp. $24

NOVELIST Kem Nunn is the most accomplished practitioner of California noir writing today, the principal heir to the tradition of Raymond Chandler and Nathaniel West. Their books are thrillers with literary and moral heft, in which acts of violence and betrayal are perpetrated by, and upon, desperate characters at the fringes of the California dream.

Nunn is best known, though, for his first book, Tapping The Source, in which he bravely took on subject matters — surfers and biker gangs — that most people associate with Roger Corman movies. Better still, he pulled it off, creating a powerful literary novel while delivering all the violence and betrayal a reader could wish for. Nunn's new novel, The Dogs Of Winter, returns to the world of surfing, and it's his best novel yet, as he adds regret and middle-aged melancholy to his emotional palette. Nunn evokes the autumnal sadness of active men past their prime, of formerly heroic figures still trying to catch the perfect wave, both figuratively and literally.

Jack Fletcher is in his forties, divorced, addicted to pills, and scraping by as a wedding photographer. Once, however, he was a leading surfing photographer, and as the book opens he's awakened by a call from the editor of a surfing magazine and commissioned to accompany two hot young surfers to Northern California. Here they are met by Drew Harmon, a legendary surfer who has not been heard from in years and who lives now in a trailer on the rugged coastline with his troubled young wife, Kendra. Harmon claims to have discovered Heart Attacks, a sort of holy grail of surfing, a set of huge, dangerous waves along one of the most inaccessible portions of the Pacific Coast, which is inhabited by impoverished Native Americans. Fletcher is to accompany Harmon and the two young surfers to the place, if they can get to it, and capture the moment on film.

But on their first foray into the water, Harmon's flimsy rubber boat is swamped by a huge wave, and the pilot, a young Indian boy, is drowned. This tragedy is witnessed by a group of locals on the beach, and the situation explodes immediately into violent recrimination. As Harmon, Fletcher and one of the young surfers begin an arduous journey along the coast in search of Heart Attacks, Kendra is kidnapped by three local men who plan a brutal revenge against her husband for the boy's death. Meanwhile, both groups are tracked by Travis, an official of the Indian Development Council, who is half in love with Kendra and who hopes to avert a confrontation.

This is a big, complicated story, and Nunn tells it masterfully. As in the best narratives, events play themselves out in ways that are both inevitable and surprising. Although there's a great deal of desperate macho swaggering in the book, none of it is on the part of the author. Each of these men is out to prove something, not only to the rest of the world but to himself, and for each of them the proof lies, like Harmon's set of perfect waves, just around the next bend of coastline. It's a quest that is at once sad and profoundly moving. And as one of three point-of-view characters, Kendra does more than just provide a counterpart to the men. She is a gripping character in her own right, having turned to New Age spirituality as a bulwark against the pain of her unhappy life. As lightweight as this belief seems at first, it turns out to be, during her greatest trial, a source of great power and even a survival skill.

Nunn moderates his prose perfectly. There's probably not an American novelist working today who is better at choreographing and describing physical action, and few who so capably combine thrills with cleareyed and compassionate characterizations.

Yet as harrowing as this book is, Nunn breaks with his literary forebears in that his outlook is realistic but not despairing or cynical. Nunn does not make this an occasion for male self-pity. Demons real and spiritual are faced here and life is gotten on with. Nunn has taken the youthful vigor, inventiveness and wit of his earlier work and crafted something deeper and more mature: an epic homage to the ragged nobility of wounded man.



ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY RUSSO

Ignorance Proves Dangerous

Wendy Smith

GIOVANNI'S GIFT
By Bradford Morrow
Viking. 325pp. $22.95

A STRONG SENSE of place informs all of Bradford Morrow's novels, including PEN/Faulkner nominee The Almanac Branch (1991) and his searching exploration of the American conscience, Trinity Fields (1995), which chronicled the divergent paths of two boyhood friends born at Los Alamos in 1944. Landscape is an equally important force in his fourth work of fiction, Giovanni's Gift, a tale of emotional growth and social conflict set against the echoing backdrop of the American West.

Giovanni's Gift features a looping time frame and a first-person narrator who occasionally teases us with hints of information he will not share until later, but these devices don't make high-modernist demands on the reader's stamina or patience.

San Francisco architect Henry Fulton has retired and returned with his wife, Edme, to his family's house on Ash Creek, high in the mountains. Ash Creek now serves as a quiet refuge for Henry and Edme, until in the summer of 1994 unknown intruders begin blasting music into the night air, then escalate their mischief over the course of a year to include cutting the phone lines and hanging a mannequin from a tree. They also leave behind a shoe that Henry, deeply shaken, recognizes as belonging to his friend Giovanni Trentas, whose corpse had been found in the woods three years earlier — with its left foot missing.

Edme is disturbed enough to phone her nephew, Grant Morgan, whose aimless existence in Rome has just lost what little focus it had with the collapse of his marriage. Ash Creek is as much home as Grant has ever known; son of a peripatetic minor diplomat, he spent summers there with his aunt and uncle as a child. But upon his return in 1995, Grant quickly discovers that he has stumbled into a situation he doesn't really understand. Henry's tense relationships with various townspeople — in particular Noah Daiches, the sheriff, and Graham Tate, a wealthy landowner — make it clear that he's keeping things from his nephew. The electric presence of Helen Trentas, daughter of the deceased Giovanni, prompts baffling responses from several people; Grant again realizes that he's out of the local loop, stirring things up with an ignorance that could prove dangerous.

Morrow skillfully establishes this fraught context, culminating with Edme's gift to Grant of a box that belonged to Giovanni. Its mysterious contents — a dance recital ticket, cigarette papers, a column of typed numbers, photos, family letters — reinforce the author's point that his protagonist is delving into other people's lives as he flees the confusion of his own.

Beautiful descriptions of scenery and weather amplify the characters' moods; the author weaves a glistening web of metaphor, with references to Pandora's box and extended passages from Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Wonder Book For Boys And Girls, to establish Grant's search for answers within a mythic framework. It's probably no accident that Grant is 33, an age with biblical resonance.

The novel's pace quickens as Grant's affair with Helen intensifies and Graham Tate's presence becomes more prominent and threatening. Commercial development of this previously untouched area becomes a plot point, providing the political undercurrent that always flows through Morrow's books. Unfolding events clarify people's motivations and resolve some of the mysteries, including Grant's cluelessness about the workings of his own heart. The closing passage, with Grant back in Rome, movingly suggests that this rootless man may yet find his true home.

Technically accomplished and emotionally truthful, Giovanni's Gift fails to satisfy only in its depictions of Helen and Edme. They, like everyone else, are viewed through Grant's eyes, but in these two crucial cases the narrator's romanticism is augmented rather than tempered by the author. Edme is a paragon of love and understanding, Helen an icon of desirable, tempestuous womanhood; neither quite convinces as flesh and blood in the way that even the minor male characters (and many female ones) do.

Where the Living Ain't So Easy

Jabari Asim

GONE FISHIN'
By Walter Mosley
Black Classic. 244pp. $22

GONE FISHIN', Walter Mosley's initial attempt to introduce his most famous character — a scrappy Texan named Ezekiel "Easy" Rawlins — was turned down by 15 literary agents. Five best-selling mysteries later, Mosley has dusted off that early effort.

At first glance, Fishin' appears to be little more than an amiable, undistinguished coming-of-age tale. However, closer reading reveals layers of intriguing complexity. This is an attribute of Mosley's most memorable work and endows it with both power and charm. He probes enduring philosophical questions involving fate, sin and the truth's slippery contours and gracefully sifts them through Easy's searching consciousness.

The novel introduces Easy as a 19-year-old eking out a hardscrabble existence in Houston in 1939. He's an orphan forced prematurely into manhood, a condition as perilous for a black male in the pre-civil-rights South as it is in today's urban ganglands. Easy is practically penniless and has but one companion, a homicidal hustler named Raymond "Mouse" Alexander.

Mosley's Mouse is becoming one of the more fascinating characters in modern American fiction. He's small, swift, fearless and more than a little bloodthirsty. He saved Easy's neck during a one-sided bar fight, felling a much larger man with a slash of his stiletto. Easy quite naturally feels indebted, and his sense of obligation has been complicated by a one-night dalliance with Mouse's fetching intended, Etta-Mae.

Easy knows enough to expect trouble when Mouse shows up at his door sporting a brand-new zoot suit, a pair of sparkling spats and a glistening gold tooth. Mouse enlists Easy to drive him to his hometown of Pariah, Texas, to help settle a long-simmering standoff with his cruel stepfather.

Mosley's descriptive skills come to the fore when Easy and Mouse hit the road. He smoothly evokes the flat Texas terrain, the way the land grows lusher along the road to bayou country. His evocations of the oppressive social environment rival his depiction of the natural world. Time and again Easy reflects on the harshness of his surroundings. Before heading to Pariah, he concludes, "Early morning is the best time. You're fully rested but not awake enough to remember how hard it all is."

Soon Easy finds himself marveling at his pal's narrative skills: "Mouse knew how to tell you a story. It was like he was singing a song and the words were notes going up and down the scales, even rhyming when it was right." The same assessment fits the author's storytelling. He establishes a tuneful rhythm as the two men pick up a teenage couple and, for reasons too complicated to disclose here, spend some time in a house hidden in the woods. By the time Easy and Mouse prepare to leave Pariah, the male half of the hitchhiking duo is dead, as is daddy Reese, Mouse's stepfather. Having played a significant role in their violent deaths, Easy realizes that "murder is a sin that burns your soul." After daddy Reese's funeral, a guilt-ridden Easy succumbs to depression: "Why did I have to live so close to disaster? Why would God want that?"

Desperate for a change of scenery, Easy flees to Dallas soon after Mouse's wedding. Shortly thereafter he is drafted for service in World War II. "I did things far more terrible than Mouse could ever imagine but it never bothered me."

After the war, Easy looks back on the past six years of his life from the temporary calm of a Paris hotel room. He is back in a world that has been made safe for democracy but not for men like him. As he reflects, gangs of white American soldiers are roaming the Parisian streets looking for solitary black soldiers to kill. Gangs of black soldiers trail the whites, bent on revenge. But Easy's battlefield experiences — and their racially charged aftermath — seem insignificant when compared to his fateful adventure with Mouse. "Maybe, if I have a son one day, and he asks me about the war, I'll tell him about the time I had in Pariah," Easy decides. "I'll tell him that that was my real war."

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
March 2 1997

Corporations no longer think big

The new US corporate philosophy of breaking up has become an industry worth $100 billion a year, writes **Ben Laurance**

IN THE United States, companies breaking themselves up is the great corporate fad of the nineties. Spin-offs — companies demerging and handing the constituent parts back to shareholders as discrete businesses — have become more important in American corporate life than leveraged buyouts were in the eighties.

The scale of this movement should not be underestimated: in the US, spin-offs, demergers, call them what you want, are a $100 billion-a-year industry.

A new book, Breakup!, published this month, tries to explain why spin-offs have become so in vogue in America, and suggests they will become increasingly popular in Britain. The trend towards companies breaking themselves up, the book says, "now seems an irreversible tide".

The authors argue that in many multi-business companies (MBCs) — those that embrace businesses in a variety of areas — the very fact that disparate activities are bundled together into one unit means that the whole is worth less than its constituent parts.

"Some companies are worth more dead than alive," they say, "because of value destruction — a pervasive, often irresistible, force in MBCs. Because of the existence of a corporate centre, and because of frictions between business units, the overall performance of a multi-business portfolio is often poorer than the performance would be if the business units were independent . . . We estimate between 10 and 40 per cent of value is destroyed by the formation of a multi-business organisation."

Of course, there will be resistance: people at the top dislike dismantling their corporate creations. But, says the book, "the breakup epidemic heralds a new era of capitalism. The future will bring a new industrial landscape. Gone will be all but a few of today's sprawling MBCs."

This may be true, given the US experience. But will the fashion for self-destruction spread to Britain and Europe? Certainly, there are signs that the trend may be taking hold on the other side of the Atlantic. ICI's decision last month to spin off Tioxide as a separate business is only the latest example. The break-up of British Gas is the most topical (but probably the most atypical, as the process was forced upon the company; it did not choose it). Even in continental Europe, companies are joining in: Sandoz of Switzerland is spinning off its chemicals business; Sonae, Portugal's largest retailer, is splitting itself up; Chargeurs, the French film and textiles concern, is dividing into two.

So breaking up has become increasingly fashionable. But does it really make sense? Is it financially worthwhile? Unsurprisingly, the authors of Breakup! answer yes to both questions. This is their calculation.

The total market value of stock market companies in the US and Britain is about $10,000 billion. At least half of these companies would gain from being broken up. Experience suggests that break-up in suitable cases adds 20 per cent to a company's stock market value. So, the authors argue, there is probably up to $1,000 billion in extra value to be realised.

Clearly, there is plenty of tendentious stuff here. The authors of Breakup! go further. Looking at Britain's largest companies, they suggest most should qualify as break-up candidates. Of the top 100, just 19 can be described as single-business operations. For 15 others, break-up need not be a priority. But of the remaining 66, say the book's authors, fully 27 should put splitting up at the top of their corporate agendas.

IF A company is in more than one business, and that diversification is reckoned to be squeezing the true value of the constituent parts, spinning off those parts as separate operations is only one possible solution.

A company can simply sell businesses — either to other companies or to management teams backed by venture capitalists. (Indeed, as happened when Granada bid for Forte and, more recently, with the Hilton bid for ITT, putting assets up for sale is seen as a way of showing that a company might indeed be worth more if broken up; it is, in effect, an admission that conglomeracy can be value-destructive.) But, according to Breakup!, "the original company remains intact. It has swapped some of its businesses for cash, with the intention of investing the cash in other businesses".

The company will still have ambitions to be large, "and its ways of operating have not been shaken up. The company has not really admitted to itself that value destruction is pervasive. It is trying to remake itself with evolution, not revolution."

Is this a legitimate point? It suggests that companies which try to focus their efforts on one or two businesses instead of several are still in some way infected with the value-destroying instinct to build an empire rather than a business.

The recent ICI example suggests the opposite. ICI was the rump left behind after the demerger of Zeneca. Yet it is still showing no squeamishness about demerging itself further.

What is more convincing in the Breakup! thesis is that once a demerger has been completed, the share price performance of the demerged companies far outperforms the stock market as a whole. Certainly that is the US experience. A study by J P Morgan in 1995 indicated that, on average, spun-off companies performed 25 per cent better than the market during the first 18 months after break-up.

Breakup! doesn't say that every multi-business company should be broken up. But break-ups are endemic "because the MBC model is being misused. There is a trillion-dollar opportunity because the MBC model is being imposed on businesses and clusters of businesses that would do much better without it." — *The Observer*

Breakup! When Companies are Worth More Dead Than Alive, by David Sadtler, Andrew Campbell and Richard Koch, is published by Capstone, price £18.99

Taxman jailed for accepting bribes

Dan Atkinson on a case of corruption that has shaken the Inland Revenue to the core

MICHAEL ALLCOCK, a one-time top UK tax investigator was convicted of taking bribes last week and jailed for five years after a judge at London's Old Bailey told him "instant imprisonment" was the only fitting sentence for a corrupt civil servant.

Allcock, aged 47, of Colchester, was convicted of corruptly accepting the services of Michelle Corrigan, the call girl who became his mistress. He was also convicted of taking a bribe of a $32,000 holiday in America.

But it was his conviction for taking bribes of $90,000 from 1987 to 1992 that has rocked Inland Revenue. This money is thought to represent just a portion of what he took, and means that, for five years, one of the Revenue's most senior investigators was bought and paid for by rich tax evaders.

Allcock's wife, Sally, aged 44, told ITN news that he was not corrupt. "I feel he just wants to get the truth out, but it's been very difficult."

Although hurt by disclosures of Allcock's affair with Ms Corrigan, Mrs Allcock, who had cancer when the relationship began, said this had not seemed so bad compared with the family's other problems.

Three of Allcock's former Inland Revenue inspector colleagues are unlikely to face charges in court, it emerged, but are accused of breaches of internal rules — mainly relating to acceptance of hospitality — and face disciplinary action.

Hisham Alwan, aged 57, last week received a nine-month suspended sentence at the Old Bailey. He had been found guilty of corruptly offering a gift, $325 that paid for the first encounter between Allcock and Ms Corrigan.

The oil consultant, one of the many tax-avoiding "ghosts" investigated by Allcock in the 1980s and early 1990s, was cleared of two other charges of standing the cost of hotel rooms for Allcock and Ms Corrigan. Alwan, of Knightsbridge, west London, who was said to owe the Inland Revenue $325,000, was ordered to pay $1,600 costs.

No confiscation order was made on Allcock, but he may have to face further investigations into his assets and may have to pay tax on his bribes.

He had faced five further charges relating to $680 of expenses allegedly claimed for five hotel rendezvous with Ms Corrigan between 1990 and 1992. He denied the charges in court, and the Crown said it would not proceed.

Since Allcock's suspension in 1992, the Inland Revenue has shut the Special Office 2 unit of which he became the head and merged it with the Revenue's inquiry branch. Investigation of wealthy tax evaders is now entrusted to conventional inspectors rather than the freebooting "ghostbusters" exemplified by Allcock.

There is, of course, an Alternative Allcock affair, one cherished by the London *cognoscenti*, kept out of the papers by a mixture of government gagging orders and a total lack of evidence. In this version, Allcock was an honest taxman who had stumbled upon insider-dealing in high places, all connected with the 1990 tax investigation into Asil Nadir's Polly Peck group that had started the Polly collapse and embraced people at the very top.

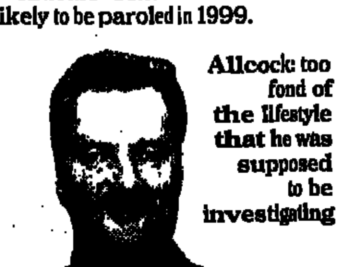
In a case characterised by mystery, the alternative version provided just the sort of through-the-looking-glass effect beloved of conspiracy theorists and spy novelists.

Allcock had, to be sure, investigated insider dealers. But the truth of his fall is more prosaic: Allcock, the Essex boy, had become too fond of the way of life he was supposed to be investigating and, consequently, too susceptible to the flexible morality of his targets. It is thought there may be further prosecutions of people alleged to have bribed him, provided they can be brought within British jurisdiction.

Sentencing Allcock, Judge Peter Beaumont said: "Your corrupt behaviour has cast a long shadow . . . It has threatened the integrity of the service itself.

"The public expects, and is entitled to expect, its servants to be incorruptible. That they are is in part maintained by the knowledge that when public servants are found to fall below those standards, it is met with instant imprisonment."

Allcock's sentence means he is likely to be paroled in 1999.



Allcock: too fond of the lifestyle that he was supposed to be investigating

In Brief

THE mutually-owned Halifax Building Society swept towards a new life as a public company when more than 97 per cent of voting members supported the UK sector's most prominent conversion to a bank — and the prospect of free shares for 8.5 million members.

CRUDE oil futures prices fell to a six-month low in London as Iraq flooded buyers with new supplies and demand slumped because of warmer winter weather. Brent futures have tumbled 16 per cent this year, after prices reached six-year highs in early January.

HANSON completed its break-up when Energy Group joined the stock market, announcing a 38 per cent rise in operating profits.

THE Bank of England marked the second anniversary of the collapse of Barings Bank with a strong warning to the City in London that the seven-figure bonuses on offer to young and inexperienced traders are exposing firms to danger. Meanwhile Andrew Fisher, a star trader at Salomon Brothers, has shocked his colleagues by deciding to retire at the age of 39 after receiving a $25 million bonus for 1996.

RANK, once the UK's biggest film-maker, has put its film distribution unit up for sale. Expected to fetch between $160 million and $240 million is a back catalogue of classic British films dating back to the 1950s as well as recent Hollywood blockbusters.

YORKSHIRE Electricity's board said it had agreed to an offer of 927p in cash for each of its shares from US groups American Electric Power and PS Colorado, thwarting the takeover hopes of UK generator Powergen.

UKRAINE will continue to press for Western aid to help complete two nuclear reactors that would offset power lost from the closure of the remaining reactors at Chernobyl.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates February 24	Sterling rates February 17
Australia	2.0952-2.0978	2.1069-2.1092
Austria	19.18-19.20	19.32-19.34
Belgium	56.28-56.38	56.67-56.78
Canada	2.2233-2.2255	2.1846-2.1871
Denmark	10.30-10.41	10.47-10.47
France	9.20-9.21	9.26-9.27
Germany	2.7260-2.7288	2.7466-2.7486
Hong Kong	12.64-12.65	12.52-12.53
Ireland	1.0274-1.0288	1.0251-1.0267
Italy	2,704-2,707	2,711-2,713
Japan	199.14-199.34	201.08-201.29
Netherlands	3.0658-3.0687	3.0828-3.0849
New Zealand	2.3408-2.3437	2.3301-2.3328
Norway	10.83-10.85	10.91-10.92
Portugal	273.96-274.21	276.76-276.03
Spain	230.72-230.94	232.21-232.36
Sweden	12.02-12.04	11.99-12.01
Switzerland	2.3738-2.3767	2.3924-2.3948
USA	1.6330-1.6340	1.6164-1.6174
ECU	1.4057-1.4074	1.4116-1.4136

FTSE100 Shares Index [illegible] at 4331.1. FTSE 250 Index [illegible]

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The International Leadership Academy is the first United Nations institution globally devoted to leadership in its multifaceted dimensions. It was officially launched by UN Secretary General Boutros-Boutros Ghali and Advisory Committee Chair HM Queen Noor of Jordan, at the UN, on the occasion of its 50th anniversary, in October 1995. It seeks to enhance the commitment of beginning leaders and potential leaders to UN values through the exercise of responsible leadership in various fields. Its innovative pedagogical approach relies on interactive learning about leadership directly from successful leaders.

The ILA 1997 Leadership Programme is scheduled (June 1-22) to take place in Amman, Jordan, and will consist of three weeks of seminars and some travel in the region: (1) The United Nations and Global Leadership Forum; (2) Leadership Skills Forum; (3) South-South Leadership Forum; (4) Leadership Peace and Security Forum; and (5) the International Leadership Forum. Distinguished speakers include:

HE Sheila Copps, Deputy Prime Minister of Canada
HE Amr Moussa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt
HE Sahabzada Yaqub-Khan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan
HE Jan Egeland, State Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway
HE Ossama El Baz, Senior Political Advisor to President Mubarak of Egypt
HE Ambassador Owada, Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations
HE Abdul Salam Majali, former Prime Minister of Jordan
HE Shimon Peres, former Prime Minister of Israel
HE Simone Veil, former President of the European Parliament
Lord Ian Gilmour, former UK Minister of Defense
Lord Frank Judd, former UK Minister of Overseas Development
The Hon Thomas S Foley, former Speaker of US House of Representatives
Sir David Steel, President of the Liberal International
HE HUI Yongzheng, China's Deputy Minister for Science and Technology
HE Nafis Sadiq, Executive Director of UNFPA, and UN Under-Secretary General
HE Nitin Desai, UN Under-Secretary General (UNCED)
HE Alvaro de Sotto, UN Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs
Senior Advisor to the Danish Minister of Social Development, Mr Jacques Baudot
US Congressman Paul Findley. US Congressman Paul McCloseky
Mr Andres Pastrana, Secretary General of Union of Latin American Parties
Prof Harlan Cleveland, President of the World Academy of Arts and Science
HM King Hussein has graciously accepted to speak at the closing session.

Cost: The subsidized cost of the entire programme will be US$ 1,900 for candidates from the developing nations and US$ 3,900 for candidates from the industrialized nations for three weeks of seminars in Amman, hotel accommodation, two meals a day, and some travel in the region.

Applications with CV, references and tel and fax numbers are invited, by 30 March 1997, from outstanding candidates, aged 25 to 45 who are already in beginning, or likely to be in, leadership positions in Diplomacy, Government, Academia, Journalism, Cultural, Economic and Scientific spheres, and NGOs.

Director, UNU/ILA
c/o University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan
Fax: 962-6-837-068

TUBERCULOSIS PROGRAMME CO-ORDINATOR FOR BNMT IN NEPAL

The Britain Nepal Medical Trust is a well established non-governmental organisation. It works in Nepal's Eastern Region with government and non-government structures in the fields of Tuberculosis control, essential drug supplies and community health.

The TB Programme Co-ordinator, is responsible for the overall planning, implementation, evaluation of BNMT's Tuberculosis and Leprosy Control Programme working in close collaboration with the Government's national TB programme. The Co-ordinator will be responsible for the management of over 50 staff. The post involves a good deal of travelling from the base in Biratnagar and is managed by BNMT's country Director.

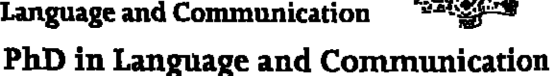
Qualifications/ Experience: A medical practitioner, ideally with experience in public health, TB control and programme management, including previous experience in working in developing countries and a good understanding of development issues. Communication skills are essential and computer literacy desirable.

If necessary Nepali language training and a TB training course would be provided prior to taking up the 3 year contract, from October 1997. The starting salary is negotiable depending on experience but will not exceed £10,970 p.a.

An application form and job description are available from:- B.N.M.T., 16 East Street Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 1HG. UK, Tel: (0) 1732 360284 Fax: (0) 1732 363876, E-Mail 106133.2134@compuserve.com

Closing date for applications, 2nd May, 1997.
Interviews to be held June 1997.

University of Wales Cardiff



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* indicates programmes with quota studentships.

For further details please contact the Postgraduate Office. Tel: 01482 465568, fax: 01482 465936, or e-mail: K.R.Hoggarth@admin.hull.ac.uk, please quote reference G1/97.

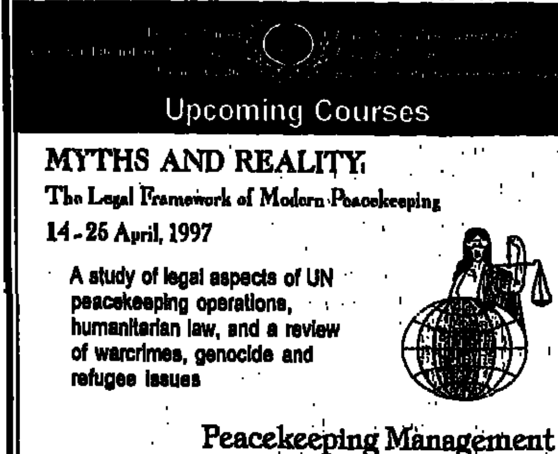
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- Able to develop capacity of local staff
- Strong commitment to NGO development work and readiness to work in a highly demanding and difficult context
- Relevant post-graduate qualification; Computer literate

Applications close: Thursday 27 March. Job description & person specifications can be mailed. Send your CV, details of 3 referees and a letter addressing each of the person specifications above to:

Programme Director, CIDSE CLV Programme, Huidevettersstraat 165, 1000 Brussels, BELGIUM
Ph (32-2) 502.58.58, Fax (32-2) 502.51.27, Email clvprog@eunet.be

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Please quote ref: OS/CR/RWA/AD/GW.
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Interview date: 17 April 1997.

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LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Department of Electronic & Electrical Engineering

MSc in Renewable Energy Systems Technology

For further details contact:
Hilary Thompson, Centre for Renewable Energy Systems Technology (CREST) Department of Electronic & Electrical Engineering, Loughborough University of Technology, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 3TU
Tel +44 (0) 1509 223466,
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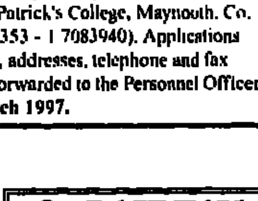
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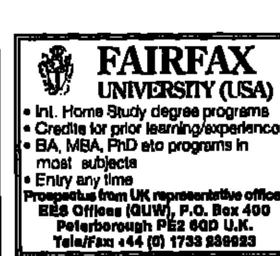
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Marching through the China storm

Deng Xiaoping

DENG XIAOPING, who has died aged 92, presided in his last years over vast changes which shattered the mould of Mao Zedong but left China's new shape still unclear. As the senior — though backstage — leader, he bore the greatest responsibility for the destruction of Chinese lives and democratic hopes in Tiananmen Square in June 1989. Yet he had already spent a decade seeking to reform the economy and give the Chinese people a better life.

In 1992 he resumed this task, lobbying against diehard colleagues to speed up the transformation already under way in the south of China. His purpose was still to preserve the single rule of the Communist Party. But he was shrewd enough to realise that its hegemony must be based upon economic rewards — or at least expectations — of sufficient size to blunt a political challenge.

Deng's "southern expedition" in February 1992 seemed at first to promise both. Millions of Chinese people plunged into what became known as the "business fever". Billions of Chinese *renminbi* were poured into new ventures and the mushrooming "development zones". Every provincial capital acquired its motorway and five-star hotel. Western banks and businesses, dazzled by high growth rates and the quasi-capitalist ideology behind it, applauded the new "economic miracle".

The gloss wore off over the next few years as economic growth created new problems and failed to solve old ones. Dengism had raised living standards for the majority and promoted social change on a vast though chaotic scale. But it was not the magic weapon, after all.

How fortunate, Deng had said after the events of June 4, 1989, that the party could still call on "a large group of veterans who have experienced many storms and have a thorough understanding of things." Otherwise the party might have been overwhelmed.

Deng had certainly experienced many storms in seven decades of struggle. And his return to power after Mao's death was very popular among a people who — in his own phrase — believed that one could not "eat socialism". Deng leapt agilely back on the political stage in 1977-78 from a springboard of popular support which brought together a coalition of interests in his favour.

He was warmly welcomed by almost the entire intellectual stratum — civil servants, scientists, teachers and engineers. Many had suffered personally during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) launched by Mao which almost brought education to a halt; nearly all shared Deng's view that it had set back China's intellectual and scientific progress by a decade.

Among the general public, Deng commanded neither the awe nor the admiration once enjoyed by Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai. As former bureaucrat-in-chief now promising to clean out the party's stables, he won support by his energy and outspokenness, yet in the end would be judged solely on results. To a minority of student and worker activists in the unofficial Democracy Wall movement (1978-80) he appeared briefly as their champion. But having used them to undermine the reputations of surviving Maoists in the leadership, he sanctioned their suppression.

Deng Xiaoping was born in Guangan county, some 150km from Chongqing, commercial capital of the western province of Sichuan. Isolated from the rest of China, Sichuan is known for producing people of independent ideas. Deng's father was a Hakka landlord originally from Guangdong province.

Like many young intellectuals in the disillusioning years after the 1911 revolution which overthrew the Manchu dynasty, Deng went abroad in the search of "self-knowledge". He was the leader of a group of 92 Sichuanese students who sailed for France in 1920. Deng stayed till 1925, working at a rubber-shoe factory.

Soon after arriving, he joined the Chinese Socialist Youth League which became a branch of the Chinese Communist Party after it was founded in July 1921. He joined the party as a full member in 1924.

Deng took part in the Long March (1934-35) when the communists headed for the remote north-west to escape destruction by Chiang Kai-shek. He headed the political department of the First Army Corps and voted for Mao at the crucial Zunyi conference. Throughout the Japanese war (1937-45), Deng served as political commissar of the 129th division of the main Communist Eighth Route Army, fighting a guerrilla war in and around the Taihang mountains in north China.

"Even the smallest achievement," wrote Deng during the war, "is paid for in people's blood." Later on, at the 1956 Congress, he would recall nostalgically the years when "the soldiers carried water for the people, and the army officers covered the soldiers with their blankets".

By the end of the civil war (1946-49), Deng was party secretary of the Second Field Army, one of the five communist armies which liberated China. Like his fellow-revolutionaries, he now became an administrator. But unlike most of them he was exceptionally good at his job, running the whole of south-west China until 1952, when he was transferred to Beijing, where he soon became general secretary of the Communist Party.

After 1949 Deng was counted a close supporter of Mao Zedong, and in 1954-55 he loyally conducted the first big purge of the party leadership. He also led the "rectification" campaign against dissenting intellectuals which followed the 1956-57 Hundred Flowers movement when they were briefly encouraged to speak out. At the Lushan Party Plenum in July 1959, when Mao attacked critics of the Great Leap Forward, which had plunged the economy into chaos, Deng pleaded illness and left early. According to one version he said he had injured his leg playing ping-pong.

But Deng had slipped up more seriously at the 1956 Party Congress when he criticised Stalin's cult of the personality in terms which Mao later interpreted as critical of himself. In the early 1960s, although still avoiding confrontation with Mao, Deng supported the head of state, Liu Shaoqi, in seeking to exclude the chairman from practical policy-making. Mao would complain that Deng had treated him "like a dead ancestor" at Politburo meetings.



Hard master: Deng crushed democratic hopes at Tiananmen Square

Liu and Deng were later labelled Numbers One and Two Persons in Power Taking the Capitalist Road in the early months of the Cultural Revolution.

By criticising himself, Deng astutely earned the chance to withdraw from the leadership struggle and sit out the worst. "What I need to do is to reflect on my past actions," he tactfully explained. "Though I have gone astray on the road of politics, with the radiance of Mao Zedong thought lighting my forward path, I should have the fortitude to pick myself up and go on."

When he was recalled to active service in 1973, apparently with Mao's personal approval, he emerged from the corner ready to fight and — more important — having decided what to fight for.

IN the summer of 1975, Deng quite deliberately declared war upon the group led by Mao's wife Jiang Qing, subsequently known as the Gang of Four, calling them "sham Marxist political swindlers" and promising to purge them from the party. They were the sort of people, he said contemptuously, who "sit on the lavatory and cannot move their bowels". Out of genuine concern for China's future — but also astutely realising where his supporters were to be found — Deng focused his attack on the ultra-left's own territory, calling for the complete overhaul and modernisation of Chinese education and for the revival of scientific research.

Early in 1976, Jiang Qing insisted upon a posthumous campaign to discredit Deng's patron, Premier Zhou, who died in January 1976, and she blocked Deng's own appointment as Zhou's successor.

Then when the Zhou-Deng supporters poured into Beijing's Tiananmen Square on April 5 to mourn the dead premier, the ultra-left over-reacted, had the demonstration broken up and Deng denounced as the instigator of a "counter-revolutionary affair". The rest of the leadership remained silent, including Hua Guofeng who in September succeeded Mao.

Deng was now the only uncompromised figure, acting out a familiar role from the pages of Chinese history — that of the wise minister who is falsely accused and at length invited to return to the stage. In July 1977, Deng was restored by the Central Committee to all his posts inside and outside the party. And at the crucial Third Plenum in December 1978, the Central Committee officially "reversed the verdict" on the Tiananmen incident in a decision implicitly criticising Hua Guofeng.

Deng now turned his attention to the task of economic modernisation — already proclaimed by Hua Guofeng but with hyperbolic rhetoric and inflated targets. The course which he now proposed had been foreshadowed in his mid-1975 polemics with the Gang of Four.

Externally, China should open its door to foreign investment and technology, using its abundant natural energy resources to help balance the books. At home, efforts should be concentrated on developing a healthy consumer economy which would both satisfy long-felt needs for a better life and provide the finance for industrial expansion. Progress had been held back in the past by an excessive rate of accumulation and the priority given to heavy industry which had distorted the economic balance and kept down the standard of living. Initiative had also been stifled by the emphasis on egalitarian distribution of income and upon centralised planning. Already in the early sixties, Deng had shown his impatience with what he regarded as empty economic dogmas which held back production. "What does it matter whether the cat is black or white as long as it catches the mice," he said in a celebrated aphorism which was often quoted against him during the Cultural Revolution.

Now he called for the expansion of enterprise self-management, for combining planning regulation with market regulation, and for ensuring that people really were rewarded "according to their work". This had a dramatic effect in the countryside, where the land was contracted out to the individual peasant household and profits were no longer shared out collectively.

In foreign affairs Deng's "pragmatism" and "moderation" usefully opened China's door wider to Western goods and capital.

Deng presided successfully in his last years over China's final achievement of independence in foreign policy, which it had been long denied by the great powers. China now took a new look at the problems of Taiwan and Hong Kong, and Deng personally pledged that the social system of both territories would remain untouched after unification — for 50 years in the case of Hong Kong, and double that time for Taiwan.

HIS reforming broom was less effective in the domestic political field. He was all in favour of greater efficiency and discipline among the bureaucracy, advocating the promotion of young able cadres, the retirement of the aged and the dismissal of the corrupt. But after 1979-80 little more was heard of the more radical proposals from the reform faction within the party, while the activists of the unofficial "democracy movement" were rounded up and jailed.

Deng was right to be concerned about the opinions of the young people of China — a nation half of whose citizens were only children during the Cultural Revolution. But in December 1986, when student demonstrations spread from the provinces to Beijing, he sided with the forces of ageing conservatism.

In 1989, as the student and scholars' movements coalesced in a powerful demand which became more radical the longer it was ignored, Deng again listened to the party elders in the provinces and to the remnant ultra-leftists in Beijing.

China must have stability, he had told President Bush that February. If everybody who wanted to stage demonstrations did so, "there will be demonstrations 365 days a year". In April, he warned that force might be needed to quell the students' "turmoil". His harsh response led them to escalate from calling for "dialogue" to demanding Deng's own resignation. The entry of tanks into Tiananmen Square was now assured.

The shifting politics of the early nineties once again seemed to cast the Deng group as relatively "enlightened" against the diehard coalition of conservatives and ultra-left. But though some grew rich, others grew disillusioned as Chinese society became more violent while the rich-poor and town-country gaps widened.

Guarded by his family, Deng was not seen in public after February 1994 and his failing health became a state secret.

John Gittings

Deng Xiaoping, politician, born August 22, 1904; died February 19, 1997



Road to ruin . . . Albanians are in a state of distress
PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN SMITH

Albania was the last communist country to embrace capitalism, but it did so with gusto, launching into what seemed like the wonderful Western world of pyramid selling. Now the poverty-stricken nation is reeling as the extent of the scams is uncovered, and hundreds of thousands of financially ruined people take to the streets to protest.
Peter Lennon reports

Going to market only to be fleeced

ON THE main street of the southern Albanian town of Fier demonstrators file past, chanting perhaps the least edifying slogan of modern political protest: *"Money, Money, Money — We Want our Money."* In November a number of dodgy pyramid investment schemes that had paid out extravagant interest began to collapse. By Christmas up to 80 per cent of the country's population had lost their life's savings, big or small. In some cases entire villages were financially wiped out.

These pyramid scams are a revival of the notorious Barney Cornfeld Investors Overseas Trust schemes of the 1960s. Subscribers pay an entry fee, from $500 up, and must then recruit a further six people. For the first level of investors to get a good return they need three levels of the pyramid beneath them to be filled. This gets us into figures of 6x6x6 leaping towards 279,936 mugs, who then need 60 million people to keep the money flowing in. There are only three-and-a-half million Albanians.

It was these financial Towers of Babel that misguided Albanians began frantically to get into from 1992, seeing them as the only way out of penury. The resulting financial distress of this country, the last to be freed, in 1991, from communist control, crosses every political allegiance.

For the past few weeks President Sali Berisha and his ruling Democratic Party have been desperately trying to control daily demonstrations, notably in the southern towns of Fier and Vlore. When the riot police were called out in Vlore last month the population stripped the officers and stoned them. In Fier demonstrators marched up and down the main street.

An assistant professor of geology (unemployed), surrounded by a group of locals made a vigorous analysis of the causes of the current chaos. The fundamental issue, he said, was the refusal of the European Union to take the matter in hand; the culpability of the Western powers in supporting a corrupt regime and, in particular, the fault of the Western press in not warning the Albanian people of the risks they were running. In the way of overwrought intellectuals with a need to bring a thesis to a logical point, he then identified me, personally, as a culprit, digging a bony finger painfully into my chest for punctuation.

Thirty-six years of isolation under the most oppressive communist leader in Europe, Enver Hoxha, and six years of corrupt rule since the 1991 liberation, has unfairly defamed the people of Albania (80 per cent Muslim). We had been warned they might stone us. But on the ground, even in distress, they are a courteous and rather tender people. The onlookers began to demur. This was not fair. I could not be personally to blame.

A computer expert in his late 30s pushed in to give a better explanation of how so many were trapped. "The world is made up of crazies and wise men," he said. "My crazy neighbour came to me and said: 'Why are you not putting your money in these schemes? Look what I am getting' [initially around 70 per cent *a month* in interest]. So I became crazy."

Enticed by conmen, the people then began to involve each other in the trap. They used money sent home from family working abroad in Greece and Italy. Some sold their apartments, others their land or cows to invest in the magic funds: Populi, Sude, then Xhaferi, Gjallica, Kamberi and above all Vefa, an international company with branches in Germany and Italy. Last September Sude collapsed and all the others followed. Vefa's pyramid is no longer operating but the company, always close to the government, has so far survived. Overall the scams have cost the country in the order of $2 billion.

I asked two young students who had held out until just a month before the collapse why they had succumbed? They were a little shamefaced; they were students of economics. Elira, aged 18, had put in $1,000 last September, given to him by his father. He was promised a return of $500 every month. By the end of four months this was to spiral to $5,000. He never got a penny. His friend, Artin, had managed to raise $1,500 and suffered the same fate.

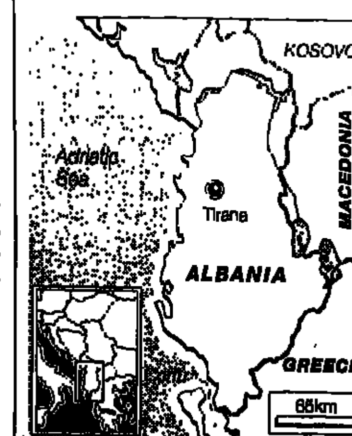
How could budding economists not work out that no company could possibly afford to give such returns? "We realised that," Elira said, "but Populi was a scheme for the people."

Communism had collapsed, they were free and now an attractive financial scheme was offered to aid the impoverished people. Elira thought of it as a kind of charity. This was not too far-fetched. They knew about aid capriciously showered on countries by Western powers, for reasons that often escaped them. "We don't have tails," the professor said. "We are civilised people. I have studied in France and Germany. We know the outside world."

But they know it only in undigested snatches and fragments, and as the famished tend to do, they pick up what will most urgently satisfy their desperate needs and fantastic hopes. (The average wage is $65 a month.)

Albania is, in fact, putting on one of the most extreme satires on deregulation and the free market that anyone has yet thought up. It is led by a government hopelessly entangled in corruption.

With the population raging daily on the streets of the main towns and the police hopelessly outnumbered,



normal rules (which of course don't obtain in this Freedonia) suggest that the next move of countries where "democratic leaders" have all the apparatus of dictatorship is to call out the army. When I asked the crowd in Fier if they were not afraid the troops would take over they looked at me in amazement.

Back in the Rogner Europark Hotel in Tirana the former minister of defence, Perikli Teta, was idling away the time. He gave me a short lesson on the army and its relation to the population. "They have no shoes," he said.

Bewildered, I said: "Who has no shoes?"

"The army," he said. "They have no shoes and they have no food. That's all you have to know about the army."

I had noted that the demonstrators had sturdy boots, so it was not difficult to imagine the timidity of barefoot conscripts up against well-shod, angry creditors.

The heartening originality of President Berisha is that he made an extraordinary miscalculation when he came to power: instead of ensuring he had a strong line of centurions for any possible future trouble he took no interest in the army. Because the police are unreliable (many of them were also taken by the scam), all the government can call on are squads of thugs paid 10 times the average wage to beat up protest leaders, as happened recently.

But you may wonder what ex-defence minister Teta was doing idling in a luxury hotel. The truth is that he was under comfortable hotel arrest. His intention had been to walk up to the stadium where a mid-day demonstration was scheduled. When he tried to go out he was told by two men in plain clothes that if he did he would be arrested and taken to the police jail "for his own safety".

He was unperturbed. It was pelting rain outside, the rain pinging off the potholes and flooding the craters which are a feature of Albanian roads, urban or rural. Complete dereliction is the outstanding characteristic of the country; it is seen in the unrepaired roads, the scabbed façades of houses, abandoned factories.

The most devastated place is Elbasan, once an unspoilt Ottoman town of 15,000 inhabitants and the site of an immense ferro-chrome and nickel industrial development constructed by Hoxha and the Chinese in the 1970s. It occupied an entire valley and a population which grew to 100,000. But the enterprise collapsed and only one factory now provides work. When a pyramid scam was introduced 70 per cent of the population lost what little they had.

The hysterical grasping for doubtful money cannot just be dismissed as stupidity. The Albanians were already destitute, with no social structure to aspire to. The puzzling reports of so many people selling their homes is better understood when we realise that this was a move towards a kind of pension scheme not unknown in Britain. Many sold their apartments to put money in the pyramids, which then paid enough to allow them to stay on and rent their own apartments. When the schemes collapsed they lost everything.

But behind this conman's festival a disturbingly highly organised structure emerges. In many cases the pyramid men were also in the real estate business. Many of those selling their apartments had to agree to give a receipt doubling the price they were actually paid. This allowed the purchaser, linked to the pyramid scheme, to produce documents establishing that they had valuable property assets if anyone ever questioned their ability to pay out.

Why did the people not suspect fraud earlier? At one stage they did. But a reassuring rumour began to circulate with, it seems, solid foundation. The pyramids were linked to a money-laundering scheme of the Italian and Albanian drug dealers, weapons and oil smugglers, loosely known as the international Mafia. Reassured that they were in the hands of properly structured criminality, the investors carried on.

Three years ago, the French political economist Alain Minc warned of a new Dark Ages in Europe: "A fundamental problem", he said, "is the incapacity to discover a foundation for the post-communist world. The world has, as in the Middle Ages, developed 'grey zones'. These are areas dominated either geographically by the Mafia or by drug barons operating within legitimate financial structures." Minc was referring specifically to southeast France. Albania is now giving an extreme demonstration of his theory.

DID they want communism back? "No, no, no," said both the professor and the computer man in Fier: "That time was a black hole," the computer man said. "To say this is a movement of nostalgia makes us angry. We are free and there are no camps, people are not taken out and shot." (Three died in early riots, but violent confrontation is now being avoided.)

"If rules are there you must respect them," added the professor. "Now there are no rules. The opposition is as bad as the government." Nor is there any rule now for future strategy. There is a discernible note of pleading rather than demand in many of their marches and in some there is a clear sense of shame that they were so stupid.

There is something a bit blurred, too, about the declarations of the Forum opposition (a protest movement which is a temporary coalition of communist, liberal and rightwing parties). There is an element of hold me back and let me at 'em. Does the opposition really want to inherit this monstrous debt?

One senses that for the moment nothing decisive will, or could, happen. (The rumoured imminent collapse of the internationally known Vefa company might stimulate exasperated, but not decisive, intervention from the West.) The pattern may be that as the weather improves and the bankrupt thousands begin crossing the mountains and try to invade Greece, then external forces may impose some messy showdown. The Greek army moved to close the frontier last week.

Meanwhile the Albanians must suffer. But in suffering they retain a touching generosity. Getting into the car at Fier I felt a touch on my shoulder. A stately 75-year-old man solemnly presented me with a small orange: "Tell them the truth," he said pathetically. "Help calm the people."

MP causes stir by going for bronzes

Owen Bowcott

A ROW over the repatriation of ceremonial sculptures looted from the ancient African kingdom of Benin has erupted within the British Labour party following an approach by Bernie Grant to museums in Exeter and Glasgow.

The MP for Tottenham in London, who has long campaigned for the return of artistic treasures taken from Benin, now part of Nigeria, has written to virtually every museum in Britain asking them to detail how many Benin bronzes they possess.

Among those contacted is the British Museum, which holds one of the largest collections of Benin objects, including two ivory leopards on loan from the Queen.

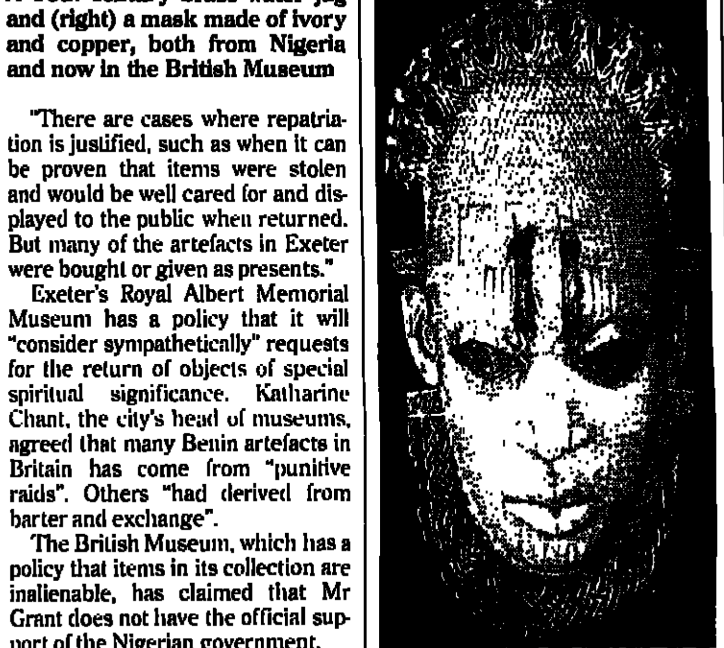
Mr Grant had intended to fly to Nigeria last week for the centenary commemoration of the "punitive British raid" on Benin City in 1897, which led to seizure of numerous relics. He was unable to go because of crucial votes at Westminster.

The bronzes and ancestral heads have found their way into numerous British collections. Mr Grant, who founded the Africa Reparations Movement, has urged that those items which can be shown to have been stolen should be returned to Benin.

But his campaign has upset local Labour politicians. In Glasgow, where the Kelvingrove Art Gallery has formally been asked to send back 22 bronze and ivory relics, the city council has resisted the request.

In Exeter, Labour's prospective parliamentary candidate, Ben Bradshaw, attacked Mr Grant's plans. "We are not going to send these treasures back — particularly not to a country governed by such an odious dictatorship as Nigeria," he said.

A 16th century brass water jug and (right) a mask made of ivory and copper, both from Nigeria and now in the British Museum



"There are cases where repatriation is justified, such as when it can be proven that items were stolen and would be well cared for and displayed to the public when returned. But many of the artefacts in Exeter were bought or given as presents."

Exeter's Royal Albert Memorial Museum has a policy that it will "consider sympathetically" requests for the return of objects of special spiritual significance. Katharine Chant, the city's head of museums, agreed that many Benin artefacts in Britain has come from "punitive raids". Others "had derived from barter and exchange".

The British Museum, which has a policy that items in its collection are inalienable, has claimed that Mr Grant does not have the official support of the Nigerian government.

Letter from Chile Susan Siddeley

The urban cowboy

LUCHO walks with a rolling gait. He could easily be a sailor on shore-leave, if he wasn't carrying a saddle: not a flat, shiny English one, but an armful of fancy plaited leather and sheepskin. He's on his way home to his shack, cobbled from old lumber and corrugated iron, a hundred metres past my gate, after a morning spent corralling cattle. As far as I can see that's what he does. He chases cows around nearby fields, whooping and hollering, swerving and skidding, and keeping a tight rein on his frisky horse.

He's always on the lookout for fresh pasture, which is scarce with the drought now in its sixth year. Even the Barrio Alto — the green and pleasant residential district on the northern side of Santiago — is feeling the pinch. Watering the garden is now limited to odd dates for odd house numbers and even dates for even. This doesn't affect Lucho or me as we have wells. Mine is a deep concrete affair with a red-tiled roof, pump and goldfish (for luck and cleanliness). His is a hole in the ground with a bucket and string.

Lucho is going home for lunch, so it must be noon. People might joke about *hora chilena* being two hours behind *hora inglesa* — which is synonymous with "punctuality" — but there's no *mañana* about lunchtime. He'll be having a bowl of *cazuela*; a stew of home-killed beef and pumpkin — watery, but tasty — with a side salad of tomatoes and onions. In exactly one hour he'll pass by again, driving a rickety cart to fetch his children from school.

Few children walk to school these days. They get picked up by yellow minibuses, ride bikes or get lifts in carts. But, as of this month, if all goes according to plan, Lucho won't be collecting them straight after lunch because the ministry of education is introducing a longer school day, part of a determined effort to strengthen the public school system. Public schools will now have classes until 4pm, instead of ending the day at 1pm. The main source of resistance is the teachers, who currently manage on their low salaries by teaching shifts in more than one school.

I'll know Lucho is back on the job again when the shouting starts and clouds of dust drift past my window. Dust particles in the air — smog — is one of Chile's main environmental problems. With the tremendous economic growth of the past five years, the number of cars in Santiago has tripled to well over a million. Cars are now restricted to being driven only four week days out of five. This measure lessens pollution and reduces traffic by 20 per cent but the problem remains — a soft brown haze all over the capital's metropolitan area most of the year. Sadly, the majestic backdrop of the Andes in all its snow-capped splendour is rarely visible.

Lucho is a *huaso* (cowboy) — one of that diminishing breed of rural workers famous for a dress uniform of dashing black and red ponchos, long leggings and silver spurs. Huasos are less in demand in the central valley now because of the rapid economic development — so successful that Chile is held up as a model in Latin America — which has caused farmland to be sold for factories, freezer plants and shopping malls.

WE OCCUPY the last enclave of tranquillity, 5km off the coast road, below the scrub-covered hills that divide the central valley from the coastal plains. We have a small vineyard which came with the house we bought at an auction before the land boom. But after one attempt at export, when the selling price didn't pay for the box the fruit was packed in, we now sell our grapes locally for wine and raisins.

The drought has halved the irrigation water supply, leaving us with a sewage slop and it is forbidden to plant vegetables that could be eaten raw, for fear of cholera and hepatitis.

I don't think our grapes or Lucho's cows will be around for much longer. Santiago's splendid new airport terminal is a stone's throw away and our quiet corner could be turned into a tourist retreat for weary passengers. When it rains, the barren hillside is transformed into a haven of soft grass and wild flowers. We are already reforesting a few hectares of low slope under the auspices of the national forestry commission with quick-growing, hardy eucalyptus. Or we might set up a heritage centre for schools. Then Lucho could be on hand to demonstrate lost skills and horsemanship.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

WHY was the Royal Navy known to sailors as "The Andrew", and is it still so called?

ACCORDING to Brewer's Dictionary Of Phrase And Fable, the nickname derives from the time of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars when one Andrew Miller acquired such a reputation in the Portsmouth area as a press-gang operative that it came to be said that his victims had been snatched into "the Andrew".

W Granville in his Sea Slang Of The Twentieth Century is a little more forthright in describing the name in question as a notorious press-gang "tough" who shanghaied so many victims into the navy that the sailors of the period thought it belonged to him. — *D A Girling, London*

SOME "old hands" say that Saint Andrew, apart from being patron saint of both Scotland and Russia, is also the patron saint of sailors. — *Graham Leach, Ilford, Essex*

ANY solutions to the Mad Hatter's conundrum: "Why is a raven like a writing-desk?"

LEWIS CARROLL himself proposed an answer in the 1897 final revision of Alice's Adventures. "Because it can produce a few notes, though they are very flat; and it is never put with the wrong end in front!" The early issues of the revision spell "never" as "nevar", ie, "raven" with the wrong end in front.

Martin Gardner, in More Annotated Alice (1990) gave two possible answers, sent in by readers: "both have quills dipped in ink" and "because it slopes with a flap". In 1991, the Spectator magazine held a competition for new answers. Among the prize-winners were: "because one has flapping fits and the other fitting flaps"; "because one is good for writing books and the other better for biting rooks"; and "because a writing desk is a rest for pens and a raven is a pest for wrens". — *(Dr) Selwyn Goodacre, Editor, Journal Of The Lewis Carroll Society, Swadlincote, Derbyshire*

ON MY COMPUTER I can discard old files to make memory available for new data. My brain contains a lot of unwanted information. Is there any way in which I can re-use these brain cells for more useful things?

YOU don't need to worry about information overflow. The brain has far more space than the largest supercomputer, but more importantly, it connects bits of information to each other and that is what makes the brain so efficient. Should you wish you can de-/re-programme parts of your brain. This is done by many sects and is loosely called brainwashing. — *Dirk Grutzmacher, Faculty of Divinity, University of Edinburgh*

Any answers?

BACK in the sixties, US scientists shot millions of copper needles into the stratosphere, ostensibly to aid radio communication. What happened to them and what, if any, were their effects on the environment? — *Carl Freeman, Thoiry, France*

ONE DAY our dog's nose is black and the next it is turned to dark brown or even purple. Is there any reason? — *Mariana Leimontas, Buenos Aires, Argentina*

HOW creative were our forebears in celebrating the first millennium? — *John Parr, Bradford, West Yorkshire*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/+44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ

A Country Diary

Elizabeth K Teather

NEW SOUTH WALES: As the sky lightens, the plovers sound reveille; screeching dementedly and stereoscopically from one horizon to the other. Eventually, blessed silence descends. We suburbanites recover from this rude start to the day and snooze on. The respite doesn't last. The kookaburras start up right outside my bedroom window. I might as well get up and sit with a mug of tea on the balcony. From here last night we could just see the regular reflection on the horizon of the Cape Byron lighthouse, the most easterly part of the Australian mainland. My friends, visiting from Yorkshire, had been astounded at the brilliant, fiery stars, the clarity of the Magellanic clouds, the complex starry context of Orion.

Lost in thought, I wince and duck as a crimson rosella, torpedo-like, dashes past at eye level. I gradually sink into the avian pace, picking out different songs and locating some of the soloists. The sweetest of pure, piercing melodies, almost perfectly Mozartian, brings the valley to a hush. I know it's a butcher bird, whose viciously hooked beak and carrion-stripping habits go uncomfortably with its musical gifts. Soon it comes and perches on the clothes line post next door, black and white and not easy to distinguish from a magpie in appearance. Kurrawongs, also black and white but bigger, occasionally gurgle and chuckle their slow "good mornings" to each other. Elegantly turned out in various greys, with yellow beaks, minas flit, chat and chirrup. Four white cockatoos flick silently across the now brilliant deep blue sky, followed by a single raucous crow.

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That thing you do better

CINEMA
Jonathan Romney

WHEN Tom Hanks paid tribute to early sixties pop in That Thing You Do, he settled for playing the same bouncy song 20 times over. If it had nothing else going for it, Grace of My Heart would still be one jump ahead, with some 20 different numbers — brisk period pastiches crafted by the diverse likes of Elvis Costello, Burt Bacharach, Los Lobos, Joni Mitchell and guitar-noise guru J Mascis. But despite the hip, strictly MTV-compatible song credits, Allison Anders's tribute to the sixties songsmiths of New York's legendary Brill Building is a remarkably old-fashioned film — Funny Girl with beehives.

In fact, to all intents and purposes, this is a backstage musical for music magazine readers — a poor little rich girl's journey through New York's pop jungle, through love's torments and the hairstyle hell of psychedelia, to her eventual goal, a platinum album's worth of Me Generation singer-songwriter drivellings. But what energises the film is its central performance by Illeana Douglas. She plays heiress Edna, who heads for New York, gets herself reinvented as feisty songsmith Denise Waverly, and becomes a champion hitmaker for a buffoonish hipster Svengali, played by John Turturro in the wig of his career.

Looking like Bambi after electro-shock treatment, Douglas has the vibrant, nervy presence of a young Streisand, and from start to finish, just eats the film up. Though she doesn't do her own singing, she makes the songs her own. There's a wonderful moment when Denise gets to pour her soul out in a heart-rending number that Costello and Bacharach composed together, reputedly over the answerphone. Douglas doesn't emote in any of the expected ways, but does a bizarre sort of grape-treading march. It's totally incongruous, but it works brilliantly, suggesting a singer who inhabits her material so much that she doesn't have to worry how she looks performing it.

Anders's script, direction and eye for a period hemline work compellingly for the first hour. Denise marries a smug, goateed would-be protest writer (Eric Stoltz), and together they blaze their way through a succession of politically edgy ditties (factory work, teenage pregnancy *et al*). Bridget Fonda has a cameo as a simpering pop starlet with a secret lesbian passion, and Anders enlists vintage chanteuse Lesley Gore to co-write a rivetingly schlocky confessional.

Things go askew come 1967, when Denise takes up with a West Coast wunderkind (Matt Dillon) transparently modelled on the Beach Boys' Brian Wilson. Anders is out to contrast our heroine's resilience with the preciousness of male, late-sixties rock culture. But Dillon's tormented machismo is a gross injustice to Wilson's neurotic fragility (poor screwed-up Brian never got near a surfboard, for one thing), and the film crumbles into wayward parody among a plethora of loopy gurus, op-art print frocks and psychobabble. When Denise finally blossoms as successfully as the figure on whose career the film is loosely based, singer-songwriter Carole King, the music takes a bathetic tumble into saccharine self-indulgence.



Hippie shaker . . . Illeana Douglas as feisty songsmith Denise Waverley in Grace Of My Heart

Several narrative threads come unravelled at this point, and you can't help suspecting that Anders had a much longer film in mind. But overall, the film's bagginess and sheer goodwill rather work in its favour. Anders doesn't attempt the usual disillusioned demolition of the vinyl dream, but gives us a personal, politically informed tribute to her favourite Women in Pop — the Spector girl groups, writers like King and Jackie de Shannon, and, presumably, Patsy Kensit, who makes an unexceptionable appearance as Denise's posh English buddy.

It's a much more even-handed image of pop history than we're used to. The film's a lot of fun, awkwardly ingenuous at times, but no juke-box jury could resist its finest hooks — the charismatic Douglas, Turturro at his goofiest, and the only closing-credits song in a decade that you'd remotely think of humming.

OF ALL American independent directors, none has such a specialised appeal as Hal Hartley. You either go into raptures about the spare romantic purity of his work, or you gape dumbfounded through all the coy courtings, impromptu dance routines and arch Godard references. To my mind, he's been remaking the same film more or less coherently since his impressive debut The Unbelievable Truth. But in **Flirt**, he's come up with a new angle on his repetition compulsion: here he actually makes the same film three times in one go.

Echoing Jim Jarmusch's Night On Earth, Hartley goes globe-trotting with the world's most angst-ridden hipsters, in three vignettes — each containing a fickle lover, a phone call and a loaded gun. The first, set in New York and starring Bill Sage from Simple Men, comes across as typically stagey, too loaded with calibrated moves and self-consciously quotable lines. Then Hartley makes you do a double-take by re-running the same lines, given a few gender twists and German interpolations, in the Berlin-set story of a gay American (Dwight Ewell) encountering his lover's wife. Taken on its own, it's the strongest sequence, especially in a silent passage where Hartley and photographer Michael Spiller suddenly evoke the heady spirit of Fassbinder. Then in the third part, set in Tokyo, the script is given a complete remix and laced with Butoh dance sequences. Running through all three sections is a wry commentary that parallels romantic dilettantism with the director's own formal preoccupations.

Hartley courts accusations of hermetic self-absorption, casting his repertory regulars — Martin Donovan, Elina Lowensohn, etc — as the usual crew of love-lorn lunks and stiletto-cheeked waifs. He even makes a taciturn appearance himself as Hal, the director of a film called Flirt. But after the ingratiating zaniness of Amateur, he benefits by putting his cards on the table: Flirt owes more to performance art than to conventional narrative film, and its high-toned tilt at audience expectations pays off rivetingly. Though it's the most recondite of Hartley's films, it's also the most fun. It's also the only film this week that looks as if it came out exactly as the director intended. These days, people write PhD theses about Hartley; this is the first of his films to make you see why they might want to.

On a sliding scale

Andrew Scott writes that Shine made a star of David Helfgott but now it could destroy him

IT WAS inevitable, given the circumstances. A charismatic concert pianist returned from the ashes, a film with massive Oscar potential, a towering performance from Geoffrey Rush and, best of all, it really happened (most of it, anyway). And because pianist David Helfgott is both alive and performing, everybody wants to hear his music.

Well, not quite everyone. In anticipation of his 19-concert US tour, the American music critics have started taking Helfgott apart. Never mind that the Australian's recording of Rachmaninov's No 3 Piano Concerto, the work featured in the film, has shot to the top of classical music charts. Never mind that since Shine's release his every performance has sold out. Critics and connoisseurs have condemned his playing.

"Defininitely in the bottom 10 per cent of Rach 3," said Scott Colebank of the Rachmaninov Society. Even more savagely, Stephen Wigler wrote in the Baltimore Sun: "Heretofore almost all classical music celebrities — down to today's Three Tenors — have had the musical goods. Helfgott doesn't." You can't be blunter than that.

These may be the latest and strongest attacks on Helfgott's pianism, but they are not alone. They can be traced back as far as his early attempts to start a career in London, before the massive breakdown that resulted in long years in care.

There is much confusion about Helfgott, largely as a result of conclusions drawn from Shine, but also because the accounts from Helfgott, his family, his wife and friends differ. One misconception is that Helfgott did not go near a piano for 20 years. Helfgott did suffer some form of breakdown on his return to Australia. He was hospitalised — for just over one year, according to biographer Beverley Ealey, whose Book Of David is at such odds with the film version that the producers reportedly tried to suppress it.

With scrupulous fairness to all members of the Helfgott family, The Book Of David dares to suggest that Peter, the father, was not a monster but a stern and overambitious patriarch whose traumatising refusal to allow David to travel to study in America without the rest of his family, was the first definitive "No" a somewhat spoiled and manipulative teenager had ever received.

On his release, says Ealey, Helfgott was supported by Perth philanthropists, buoyed by a first marriage that was not in the film, and even obtained work as a répétiteur with the Western Australia Opera Company. However, his condition deteriorated and he was hospitalised again in 1974. Four years later, released to Gildercliffe half-way house, where he again had access to a piano, he was trusted with his own key, to come and go as he pleased. In this time, says Ealey, he played and taught music and performed with a local symphony orchestra.

"David's not a great pianist; he never was. But that's not the point," says Dr Chris Reynolds, the physician and restaurant owner who employed and befriended Helfgott, even moving him into his own home in Perth. He still has mixed feelings about his portrayal on screen. According to Reynolds, Helfgott is above all an entertainer.

"He plays to make himself happy. Because he plays so well, he makes other people happy. His fingers are doing these incredible things — they're almost a blur — and he's not looking at the keyboard. He's looking all round with this great goofy grin, and you can't help but love him for it." That's the point. He may never win another competition, but does he need to? The entertainer has found his public. He lives for music and he's unceasingly giving.

But it's not, as some critics are calling it, a freak show. Like Nigel Kennedy before him, Helfgott's triumph of the spirit is now taking classical music to a new audience. But how long can the moment last? Old friends like Chris Reynolds and Beverley Ealey fear the pressure of the five-country, 52-concert schedule on which he has embarked. He will, of course, have his rock, his Gillian, ever-present. But is he ready? Physically he's very strong. Mentally he's fragile as crystal. Can he cope with the critics? "The truth is is that David is regressing," says Dr Reynolds. From a professional standpoint, Dr Reynolds worries that, while high doses made Helfgott sluggish, his present medication levels could now be too low for his own good.

To prove his point, Reynolds shows me videotapes made 12 years apart. The first are local interest — current-affairs snippets of a chain-smoking Helfgott playing for patrons at Riccardo's. In interview, his speech is peppered with childish "Gollys" and slightly slurred, but it is nowhere near the stream-of-consciousness babble that Geoffrey Rush delivers so convincingly in Shine. Even allowing for judicious editing, Helfgott looks and sounds nervy but rational.



Helfgott: 'He's not a great pianist. But that's not the point'

Fast forward to 1996 and a much longer segment that both celebrates the pianist and promotes Shine. Now the artist is the figure that Rush portrays — the machine-gun patter, the constant repetition, the constant pawing.

"There is an enormous difference between his mental states then and now," says Reynolds. "The world wants to believe that the love of an exceptional woman has cured David. Gillian deserves a solid gold medal for what she's taken on — but what's going to happen when the media get to him and start taking him apart about his playing? When David collapses on tour, they'll say, 'Tough — where's the next victim?'"

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Circumstance despoils the man

THEATRE
Michael Billington

IVANOV is often referred to as Chekhov's Hamlet. But, ironically enough, Ralph Fiennes, who plays the title role in Jonathan Kent's breathtaking revival at the Almeida Theatre in London, seems closer to the great Dane than he ever did in Shakespeare's play. This is a performance packed with just the right emotional intensity, self-loathing and excoriating candour.

Written in 1887, Chekhov's first major play is closer to melodrama than to the symphonic realism of the later work. But in Ivanov himself Chekhov creates a memorable hero: a bankrupt landowner who, at 35, is tormented by his own lassitude and by his unhappy marriage to his tubercular wife. He seeks nightly refuge on the neighbouring Lebedev estate where the daughter of the house, Sasha, falls headily in love with him. But this only intensifies his guilt and anguish.

As David Hare's excellent new version insists, Ivanov is not really a Russian Hamlet. He is simply acting Hamlet. But the key to the role is that under the self-hatred and cruelty — and at one shocking moment he calls his wife "a dirty Jew" — you should sense what might have been. Fiennes catches precisely this contradiction. He is full of despair and ineffectualness, yet he also implies that Ivanov has an honesty and intellect that has been despoiled by circumstance.

Melodrama the play may be in places, but it is also an exuberant social comedy that depicts the pettiness and vulgarity of Russian provincial life with Gogolian fervour. Kent's production releases the play's comic energy through a gallery of memorable performances.

Oliver Ford Davies plays Ivanov's uncle as an embittered misanthrope who craves the excitement of abuse. Anthony O'Donnell is equally unforgettable as Ivanov's mercenary steward. And Bill Paterson makes Lebedev a bulbous soak filled with residual kindness. The scene where the three of them get plastered and are reduced to beating their heads against walls and tables as they are hijacked by an unstoppable cardbore is as riotous as anything on the London stage.

Melodrama and farce are juxtaposed, rather than seamlessly mingling as they do in Chekhov's masterworks. Yet the play has abundant theatrical vitality and touches deep emotional chords. Ivanov's neglected wife, in particular, arouses our pity and Harriet Walter plays her beautifully as a wan, pale figure who cannot quite relinquish her love for her impossible husband.

Russian Hamlet . . . Ralph Fiennes as the tormented hero in Chekhov's Ivanov PHOTOGRAPH: HENRIETTA BUTLER

We see Chekhov's four great plays often enough. What we have at the Almeida is a joyous resurrection of an earlier work that not only hints at what is to come but explores the absurdity of Russian life and the human condition with fizzing satirical energy.

Doug Lucie's **The Shallow End**, at London's Royal Court Downstairs, takes up where Hare and Brenton's Pravda left off. It is an attack on the overweening power of global media moguls, and on the downmarket spiral of the British press. But, while the play is laced with wit and fired by passion, Lucie doesn't so much dramatise the issues as hurl them at us in polemical fashion.

Like the kind of Sunday paper it satirises, the play comes to us in sundry sections. The binding factor is the country-house wedding of a media tycoon's daughter, an occasion used by one of his Sabbath editors for a bit of hiring and an orgy of firing. It starts with his engagement, largely through mutual verbal masturbation, of a star female columnist who comes on like a sawn-off scouse Dorothy Parker. And it proceeds, via the neutering of the soccer correspondent and the political editor, to a showdown with an Australian foreign correspondent who plans to blow the whistle on the company's dirty Third World activities in a TV documentary. Any resemblance to living persons is, presumably, far from coincidental.

Given the size of the target, Lucie inevitably scores quite a few bullseyes. Rees, the Pilgerish foreign correspondent, breezes in to attack distorted news values, the threat to democracy posed by vast international corporations, and the vicious circle by which the decline in journalism breeds ever-greater disillusion with the product.

BUT Lucie gets even closer to the bone when he shows how veteran writers get sucked into the enveloping trivia in order to save their jobs: the soccer correspondent's reluctant acquiescence in a new tabloid fanzine section combining football, comedy and rock 'n' roll has a grim ring of truth.

But, like most plays about journalism, this one makes newspapers sound more exciting than they really are. Maybe we lead sheltered lives on the Guardian, but I've never actually been to a top-brass wingding where one showbiz writer was snorting coke while another was making uninterrupted love on top of a billiard table.

But the supreme irony is that, in a play attacking the transformation of newspapers into one more consumer commodity, Lucie often adopts the tone of a peculiarly hectoring leader writer. I could hardly believe my ears when the political editor's wife, given the right aura of murderous neglect by Jane Asher, numerically catalogued the symptoms of journalistic delusion. When, in real life, did you last hear a person list their points from one to five?

Lucie has always had a feel for the contemporary scene. In Hard Feelings (1982) he was on to the apolitical narcissism of the style-generation long before anyone else: in Progress (1984) he nailed the emotional confusion of modern liberals. And here, he says some urgent and necessary things about the newspaper industry's downmarket drift, about the dangers of monopoly and about the blurring of political left and right.

But, a bit like Osborne on one of his lazier days, he makes his points more through preaching than dynamic interaction. Robin Lefevre's production, set against Robin Don's ingenious back-projections, is perfectly efficient, and the actors do what they can to create tension: the best scenes are easily the first and last, in which Tony Doyle's quietly brutal editor hires Julia Ford's abrasive, sex-obsessed columnist and fires Nigel Terry's truculently independent foreign correspondent. Lucie often writes very well; but, in seeking to nail journalism, he ends up adopting some of the profession's more dubious practices.

Music for the millennium

SOUNDING THE CENTURY
Edward Greenfield

EVEN the BBC has rarely taken on quite such a big musical project as Sounding the Century. This concert of Stravinsky with Pierre Boulez conducting the BBC Symphony Orchestra marked the grand opening.

Sounding the Century is the gimmicky title for a series of concerts of 20th century music between now and the millennium aiming to show — in the words of the organisers — "the astonishing richness of the works that have been created".

Stravinsky's Rite of Spring, once regarded as so difficult, lies at the very heart of the modern repertory, a masterpiece accepted and loved in a way almost inconceivable in the years after it was first performed in 1913.

Boulez himself has played a significant part in that process, and it is fascinating how his interpretation has developed. It is now just over 25 years since he was appointed chief conductor of this orchestra, initially shocking us with the uncompromising brutality he seemed to encourage in such a work as this. How different now.

Here was a performance as powerful and intense as any before, but its expressiveness, its natural warmth, reflected the emotional elements in this score which even the composer was reluctant at first to acknowledge.

The idea of introducing that masterpiece with two neglected Stravinsky works of the same period was a good one. The brief, complex choral piece, The King of the Stars, worked splendidly as an introduction to the Rite, with the BBC Symphony Chorus coping with harmonies which for decades daunted any performance.

The opera, Le Rossignol (The Nightingale), a stylised telling of the Hans Andersen story in three brief acts, has poetry in plenty too, but it suffers from the four-year gap which separated the writing of Act I from the rest.

But what it lacks even in a performance as finely wrought as this is drama. It was only when, momentarily, Helene Parraguin as Death intervened near the end that it seemed anything but static.

Cinders of the Black Country

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

SARAH SMITH was 19. She sat beside a fireplace, her fair hair fluffed around her face, her arms hugging her knees. She wore jeans and silver slippers. She could have been auditioning for Cinderella. Sarah, the first subject of **A Woman Called Smith** (BBC2) — a series of 10-minute films — was a Cinderella for our times.

She talked fluent Dudley. She was confiding and candid. When she was 14, she became pregnant. Her father cried. "I felt really awful. But he never threatened to throw me out or nothing. He never really shouted at me. He just accepted it." Darren is five and fair like her. They all live together.

When Sarah went to the ball, she was dipped in gold. Her mother had teased her hair till it stood on end ("I'm sorry, but I've got to do it, our Sarah"). Her gold dress was fringed with feathers and strapped with brilliants ("She'll do," said her father). Her fingers on her partner's shoulder were lifted as if she were drinking tea. Her neck was twisted so her fixed smile showed. She was 49. She looked it.

Her father roared from the balcony of the Tower Ballroom "Forty-nine!" but the judges were deaf to entreaty. Sarah came third in the British Youth Ballroom Championship. "Shit!" said her mother.

"Top to bottom!" said her father.

She sobbed bitterly on her mother's comfortable bosom.

Sarah may not believe me when I tell her that this made far better television than winning.

The film tick-tocked between her life in Dudley packing leaflets and her ballroom dancing. Once the border blurred and she danced down a lane in a cyclamen dress and all the little houses pricked up their ears. "My sister and I used to watch Come Dancing, watch the pretty dresses and go, 'Oo, I'd love to wear one of them, me, and gerrout there and be on the telly.'"

In **Gobble** (BBC 1) Kevin Whateley was hung up by the heels on a turkey conveyor belt with only his hands to cover his quandary while Keith Barron was plucked, stuffed, trussed and shrinkwrapped in order to provide a disturbingly succulent bird.

Gobble, Ian Hislop and Nick Newman's overblown comedy about a food scare, was intended for Christmas but postponed as people were actually dying at the time as a result of the *E. coli* epidemic in Scotland. It is a difficult play to place. Last week, for instance, the entertainingly named Hogg defended his handling of mad cow disease in the House of Commons. At any old time, Gobble seems to be in encouragingly poor taste.

Whateley, an incorruptible innocent at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fish and Food ("I wanted something to get my teeth into"), is pursuing the elusive truth about a turkey scare. It was a long journey that seemed longer than it actually was, though I'd be sorry to have missed Jack Dee in his mortuary ("We don't get many civil servants here, only the Princess of Wales") or Newsy Bunny, who is our own worst instincts made fur.

I used to believe that I would be shamelessly bribed for a good review. It's been 35 years and not once — *not once, dammit* — has anyone tried to court, corrupt, suborn, seduce or tickle my integrity. But at long last, Kelvin MacKenzie has sent me a fiver to go and see highlights of his Live TV — his bouncing dwarf, his topless darts.

Well, half a fiver, actually. I get the other half when I get there.

Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

Hidden Histories of Science, ed Robert B Silvers (Granta, £7.99)

ESSAYS from Jonathan Miller, Oliver Sacks, Stephen Jay Gould, and others not so famous but just as good, about various byways and back-alleys of scientific discovery: such as Goethe's insistence, against Newton, that "optical illusion is optical truth"; or the links that were once sought between viruses and cancer — and which have been seen to be worth pursuing again. Edifying stuff.

Fire: From A Journal of Love, by Anaïs Nin (Peter Owen, £13.95)

POOR Anaïs Nin, first having to be poked by her dad and then by Henry Miller. Still, it makes for a great set of journals. This volume covers 1934-7, masses of nookie, unintentional hilarity. Entry for Feb 8, 1937: "Monday I arrived at Henry's and he immediately leaned over me and began kissing me and caressing me, locking me in his arms with an intensity rare in him, holding firmly and pouring his whole being into me. I felt the full force of his subterranean love. Fell asleep." Me too.

The Big Kiss, by David Huggins (Picador, £5.99)

THIS won the Literary Review's Bad Sex in Fiction Award this year: but as even Auberon Waugh pointed out, this was because (I think I've got this right) Huggins described an act of bad sex well, in a good novel. A straight A-to-B tale of a yuppie whose world collapses around him, taking us to a satisfyingly violent climax via paranoia, adultery, rape, and puffy jackets.

Stormy Weather, by Carl Hiaasen (Pan, £5.99)

SOMEONE is quoted on the back as saying that Hiaasen writes "the funniest English of this century", begging, even out of context, the question of that writer's familiarity with the language. This is about the sleazeballs who descend on Florida after the hurricane; but frankly, it is not Hiaasen's best, and just because we hate sleazeballs, conmen, and despoilers of the environment as much as he does, this does not necessarily make this as good or funny as Double Whammy or Striptease. But it has its moments.

Flirt, by Hal Hartley (Faber, £7.99)

THE preface begins with a quote from Jean Renoir: "Everyone really only makes one film in his life, then he breaks it up into fragments and makes it again with just a few little variations each time." Which is what Hartley has done in the space of this one film — each segment (set in New York, Berlin and Tokyo, is a self-contained vignette about flirts, on the brink of committing, who manage to shoot themselves, or get shot, in the face. For the armchair director.



Theatre of politics . . . Michael Heseltine at the Millennium exhibition site in Greenwich — MARTIN ARGLES

What's in it for Michael?

Roy Hattersley

Michael Heseltine: A Biography
by Michael Crick
Hamish Hamilton 468pp £20

I HAVE watched Michael Heseltine from the other side of the House of Commons despatch box for almost 30 years. And for much of that time I have felt genuine admiration (as well as sneaking envy) for the *élan* with which he approaches the business of politics. But I have never understood what it is, apart from personal ambition, that drives him restlessly on.

Other great Tory figures wore their motives on their sleeves. Margaret Thatcher wanted to rebuild the world in her own image. William Whitelaw felt a duty to serve. But, in the American phrase, "what makes Michael run?" The answer, on the evidence of Michael Crick's biography, is that for the First Secretary of State and Deputy Prime Minister, politics is an end in itself. The attraction is the political process, not the results that politics achieve.

According to Crick, relative failure at school made him determined to succeed, socially rather than academically, at university. After he came down from Oxford, he made himself a fortune in publishing and property. There were a couple of fiascos along the way. He built houses which he could not sell and on the day when he discovered that he was about to become a father, he had to warn his wife that the family might have a bankruptcy to go with the new baby. But if success of any sort was what he wanted, he was well on his way to fulfilling his ambition before he entered the House of Commons.

Michael Heseltine is a pathological politician. Only the peculiar glory of government would do. He has a fierce belief in the infallibility of the market economy. But no great body of detailed ideology drives him on. On Crick's evidence — from mild dyslexia at preparatory school to a reluctance to study civil servants' written submissions — it is doubtful if he has even opened the great texts of Conservative philosophy. He is, in fact, like a character in a political novel — all dash and daring, tossing hair, fiery speeches and no consistent thread of belief to guide him through the maze of government. It is what has made him a great, indeed almost unique, survivor.

Heseltine's ascent to almost the top of the greasy pole has been a spiral, not vertical. Crick leads readers round the twists and turns with considerable narrative skill. As Secretary of State for the Environment he inherited the party's "right to buy" legislation and embraced the sale of council houses with such enthusiasm that he later described himself (at least in that particular) as "an early model Thatcherite".

The relationship between Margaret Thatcher and Michael Heseltine totally broke down after Heseltine was "promoted" to the Ministry of Defence — where, according to Crick, he was generally loathed. The ex-Chief of the Air Staff, Sir Keith Williamson, when approached by Crick, replied, "I have so little regard for Michael Heseltine that I would find it distasteful even to discuss him".

No doubt the top brass took much offence at the Guards Tie which Heseltine so often wore — after 62 days in the training regiment which ended when he was discharged from National Service in order to become a parliamentary candidate. But their real complaint was that he was not interested in the department's work.

Paradoxically it was his passionate commitment to a Ministry of Defence idea that caused the great breach between Heseltine and Thatcher — and his resignation. Crick takes the reader through complicated disputes over the future of Westland Helicopters and the need for a "European solution" with remarkable clarity.

But the real questions concerned Heseltine's motives and conduct. It seems, if all Crick's careful evidence is put together, that he was spoiling for a fight. There is little doubt that the Cabinet walkout was premeditated. His colleagues assumed that the Prime Minister was determined to humiliate him in one way or another. Heseltine decided to shoot first. He told BBC TV's Panorama, "If, at the end of the day, I had backed down from that, they would have known I was a man of straw." The principle at stake was Michael Heseltine's image.

There followed a period of wonderfully organised activity on the Tory back benches — always faithful to the party, always offensive to Labour and always aimed at promoting his own prospects. Then Geoffrey Howe resigned from the Government and, with an immaculate sense of timing, Michael Heseltine announced his decision to challenge Margaret Thatcher for the Tory leadership. No other senior Conservative politician would have had the dash or daring to do it. And there must have been a moment when Heseltine believed that his courage had brought the ultimate reward. Reading Crick it is difficult to believe that, even now, the dream has faded. Michael Heseltine will never be Prime Minister, but it would be a rash man who gambled against him having another try.

Despite his political rehabilitation by John Major — who had good cause to be grateful for the way in which Margaret Thatcher was pushed aside — the years which followed must have been an anti-climax. He still put on great parliamentary shows and bailed the Government out of those difficulties which were containable. He was remarkably successful in "slowly defusing" the crisis which followed the 1992 announcement to close down most of the coal industry. But now, despite the grandeur of his title, he seems an old-fashioned figure — arguing with radio journalists and television interviewers in exactly the way which now antagonises an increasingly unpolitical electorate.

But none of that should detract from his great achievement. Nobody else of his stature would have challenged Margaret Thatcher. If the Conservative leadership had not changed, the Government — still burdened with the poll tax — would have lost the 1992 election. Michael Heseltine can take credit for both restoring the fortunes of the Tory party and changing the course of history. At least the Tory party has good cause to feel grateful to the man who is more interested in political theatre than political ideas, and remains obsessed by the business of government rather than what government can achieve.

Barriers to belonging

Maya Jaggi

The Nature of Blood
by Caryl Phillips
Faber 213pp £15.99

IN AN oeuvre spanning centuries of the African diaspora, Caryl Phillips has written back into the picture people habitually erased from it — from African colluders in the slave trade to black GIs. His sixth novel, too, bridges continents and epochs, yet its characters recall three figures of mythic familiarity: Anne Frank, Othello and Shylock.

The novel's distinct but interwoven stories centre on a young German woman, Eva, who lives through the Holocaust; the Moorish general Othello hired by the Doge to repel the Turks; and Servadio, a Jewish money-lender in 15th century Venetia accused of ritually murdering a Christian child.

Lesser characters — Eva's Uncle Stephan, who takes up arms to carve out a homeland in Palestine; Gerry, the "liberating" British soldier whom Eva follows to England; Malka, an Ethiopian Jew vainly seeking a home in Israel — echo themes of unbelonging and remembering, the sundering of families and the betrayal of women by men.

Eva's voice is a remarkable imaginative study of trauma. As her searing memory careens obsessively back and forth, from the liberation of the camps back to 1930s Germany, the fracturing prose registers psychic disintegration.

Othello's narrative, meanwhile, edged with the irony of our knowing his fate, displays Phillips's abiding fascination with the Uncle Tom figure, the "house negro" who renounces religion, language, family, in the deluded hope of acceptance and self-advancement.

While Eva and Othello spin their own tales of damage and accommodation, Servadio's history emerges at a remove. Citing anti-Semitic laws and malign rumours, a third-person narrative evokes startling parallels with the Nazi era. It uncovers the hypocrisy of a society that needs but despises "outsiders".

While readers are drawn in through the anguish of the persecuted, their gaze is turned inexorably towards the society that persecutes. "How is it possible to be so angry with people who have done you no wrong?" Eva's ingenuous question echoes through the novel. The terrible climax of Servadio's fate hints at an answer: as flesh burns, grateful spectators are "deeply moved by the power of the Christian faith and its official Venetian guardians". This hermetic society cements its identity though the ritual annihilation of the Other.

The germs of this novel are clearly present in Phillips's book, The European Tribe (1987). The novel probes the bizarre tribal obsession with "purity" of blood — race, bloodlines, lineage, "mixed" blood, "marrying out", "marrying in". Europe's invisible barriers, it hints, are as impervious as Venice's ghetto walls. In Europe's myth of homogeneity, identity defined through blood, lies the seeds of violence.

Phillips is a cool stylist whose intricately structured work builds with a slow-burning, emotional power, and here is some of his finest writing to date. Yet the ultimate strength of The Nature Of Blood lies in its openness. In its insistent questioning, it counters the pain of personal remembrance with a sombre warning against historical amnesia.

Nightmares of the mag man

John Dugdale

With Friends Like These
by Nicholas Coleridge
Orion 374pp £16.99

SET IN the magazine industry, where narrator Kit Preston oversees a portfolio of chic glossies, Nicholas Coleridge's novel has obvious affinities with Michael Tolkin's satirical Hollywood thriller The Player. In With Friends Like These, too, there is a glamorous milieu, initially presented as alluring, but rapidly exposed as precarious and peopled by machiavels; a central figure who is powerful, yet dependent on the philistines who bankroll him; and the murder of a writer — here Preston's tricksy, minxy star interviewer Anna Grant — which suddenly dislodges this hero, as prime suspect, from his enviable eyrie.

What's strikingly different is that The Player's Griffin Mill remains a player until almost the last page, still going into Burbank to talk deals while police and studio suspicion of his involvement grows. So the book never actually quits Hollywood, never becomes wholly a murder mystery.

Coleridge, by contrast, splits his story in two, leaving Weiss Magazines behind in the second half as Preston is deposed after a takeover and goes on the lam as both hunter and hunted. All the engrossing insider mag lore is in the first half, accordingly, and all the teasing, overlapping subtexts: the parallels between Weiss and Condé Nast UK, which Coleridge runs; the game of robing real people in fictive disguises; the possibility that Kit's experiences, from the triumph of a despised rival to the curtailed affair with Anna, act out his creator's most recurrent nightmares and reveries.

From the moment when Preston lists his own suspects for Anna's killer, all one-dimensional stock types — megalomanic German tycoon, seductive arms dealer, bitch queen editor — the novel forfeits this quality of nuance.

There is a perfectly serviceable thriller plot, including such mandatory components as a car chase, romance on the run, and a surprise final twist. Kit's complicated love-life is deftly interwoven with the crime narrative. The writing remains accomplished. But a story Coleridge is uniquely equipped to tell has become one that any number of genre specialists could emulate.

Like Tolkin, he ends with a minor-key coda, the hero pensive despite a new job and lover. The last line ("I still miss her so much sometimes") goes to the slain hackette.

Since she dies on page 75, it's difficult to discern whom or what Anna represents here, consciously or unconsciously (though I'd nominate the young Tina Brown, with whom the author worked at Tatler, as a juicier symbol and more plausible model than Zoë Heller or Christa D'Souza). As the novel's only ambiguous, complex character, however, she seems to signify for Preston the now closed opportunity of a life less shallow, more adventurous. And perhaps for Coleridge himself the imaginative journey that might have been, had he not turned off after her death on to the five-lane freeway of crime fiction.

A world together

Jonathan Steele

Every Secret Thing: My Family, My Country
by Gillian Slovo
Little, Brown 282pp £16.99

GILLIAN SLOVO has the ambiguous blessing of two brilliant and heroic parents, and in this wonderfully moving memoir she does them more than proud. The agonising quests which she undertakes — starting with the reasons why they seemed to put their political agenda above their children's needs, and ending with the tightest secrets of their own relationship — are pursued with the same relentless determination, courage, and striving for perfection which they always showed.

In one sense Gillian has gone better. While her father "always favoured external to internal processes", and the same was true of her eloquent but sometimes tongue-tied mother, Gillian's strength is emotional expression. Anger, frustration, and the hunger for sharing wash over her pages, though they never swamp the admiration for her parents which runs through the book like a spine of steel.

The parents in question, Ruth First and Joe Slovo, were unique. It would be hard to think of a political couple anywhere in the English-speaking world in the second half of this century who did more to change a whole society.

The South African struggle was a national liberation movement and, in the dreams of many, the engine of a class revolution. Perhaps for that reason it produced an impressive number of genuinely equal partnerships: the Sisulus, Tambos, and Buntings, to name but three.

What distinguished Ruth First and Joe Slovo was that, although each spent many months in prison, they had the luck or judgment to leave the country before the heaviest clampdown, and used their energies in exile to brilliant effect. She was a publicist and academic in Britain and Mozambique, and he operated on the edge of South Africa as chief of staff of the African National Congress's armed wing. Without them, the pressure for international sanctions and the campaign of "armed propaganda" would not have been so successful.

Gillian Slovo is the middle one of their three daughters. She was 12 when the family left for London, 30 — and by then already a professional novelist — when her mother was killed by a parcel bomb in Maputo. Her sister, Shawn, portrayed the children's view of their parents' mysterious life of conspiratorial politics in her poignant film A World Apart some years ago.

Gillian begins with the same theme, quoting her six-year-old sister blurting out to neighbours: "Mummy's gone to prison to look after the black people." She describes the "Innocent Fifties", her parents' Camelot of whirlwind parties when radical whites and Africans danced in secret trysts before the repression set in in earnest. They had the best of both worlds: the dangerous excitement of a noble cause and the material ease of middle-class white South African life.

Gillian quotes Mac Maharaj, a close family friend (now South Africa's Transport Minister), as saying that after seeing A World Apart some African comrades felt the children were whiners who needed a good slap. Mac disagreed, pointing out that the kids of African comrades had it better since they were not isolated. But Gillian said she understood the "good slap" reaction.

"It was part of my inheritance anyway, this inner voice that asked how I dare protest when so many Africans had suffered so much more . . . It never went away, this conflict between the demands of one and the needs of the whole. We knew enough about what our parents were doing to realise that we couldn't ask them to make another choice. But could we also find a way to hush those inner voices which cried out for safety, security, normality — all those things our white school-friends had?"

The question nagged Gillian far into adulthood. Her book strains with a longing to forgive as long as her parents first repented. If only Ruth — "this best of mothers and the worst" — had said she was sorry, or if Joe had indicated "he valued me as much as he valued South Africa". Too late, it is Nelson Mandela who finds the words on the day after Joe's death from cancer, six months after the ANC's election victory. As they grieve together, the president tells Gillian how his own grown-up daughter once flinched as he tried to hug her, bursting out: "You are the father to all our people, but you have never had the time to be a father to me." This, he said, was his greatest, perhaps his only, regret.

Gillian Slovo recognises the changing dynamic of the generations and the need for everyone to carve out his or her own life. She describes how her grandmother Tilly, as "political" a woman as Ruth, sacrificed herself for her daughter, taking charge of Gillian and her sisters during their parents' constant absences. She records that as a child Joe's life was worse than theirs. Parentless at the age of 12, he yet became an eternal optimist.

Gradually she turns to the relationship between Joe and Ruth. The political one was well known: his loyalty to Soviet communism, "the organisation man, biting back criticism of the system that supported him . . . his eyes always focused on a greater goal"; "Ruth the critic, the outsider who questioned orthodoxy." What drives Gillian on is an almost obsessive need to know more of their private life. Joe repeatedly tells his daughter to mind her own business.

Via her parents' friends, Gillian learns of and resolves to meet her mother's lover, with whom Ruth had a four-year affair while writing plaintively clinging letters to her exiled husband. In a harrowing scene, the dying Joe breaks his silence with Gillian and launches into a desperate tirade against the wife who betrayed him. But his cupboard contained its own skeleton, and Gillian feels ashamed of her father for the only time.

Driven by the urge to see, not just to know, Gillian also hunts down the retired security policeman who organised the bomb which killed Ruth. Yet what might have been the climax of a lesser book seems almost irrelevant beside her traumatic hunt for the truth about her parents. Joe had warned her not to bother with the killer because meeting him might provide truth but no catharsis.

The real catharsis is more profound. "I'd realised that memory, experience, interpretation could never be fixed or frozen into one, unchanging truth. They kept on moving, relentlessly metamorphosing into something other so that the jagged edges of each fragment would never, ever slot together." After the turbulence of Gillian Slovo's many discoveries, these are words of Sophoclean wisdom.

This book is available at a special discount price of £13.99 from Books@The Guardian Weekly



Ruth First and Joe Slovo with Gillian (right) aged 12, and Robyn, aged 10. First had just been expelled from South Africa

Changing landscapes

Tom McCarthy

Flight Paths of the Emperor
by Steven Heighton
Granta 240pp £8.99

IN THEIR own quiet, understated way, Steven Heighton's stories aspire to an Ovidian kind of grandeur, singing of bodies, cultures and landscapes both physical and spiritual in states of transformation. Although the author's native Canada crops up occasionally, the main setting is Japan.

Technically, the best pieces are little short of brilliant. Beneath the straight, Hemingwayesque account of a summer spent waiting in a subterranean Osaka restaurant in "Five Paintings of the New Japan" lies an ingenious manipulation of images and objects. A Van Gogh reproduction, for example, metamorphoses from stage-prop to symbol (surrounded by indigenous calligraphic scrolls and sumi it is, like the narrator, a lone Westerner) and on to synecdoche, standing in for the city's recently acquired collection of European paintings, the need to house which brings about the restaurant's eventual demolition.

The most formally adventurous story, "A Man away from Home has no Neighbours", possesses the same protean versatility: a loopback to a character's ancestor, a soldier in the Russo-Japanese conflict of 1905, quick-changes into a war film viewed in the bedroom of a Love Hotel. Movement and transition characterise and carry even the collection's shortest snapshots: in the two-page story "Magi" a group of boys mistake an orbiting satellite for a crashing plane; recalling the episode years later, one of them writes: "Some day we would trace our scattered, solitary orbits to this place."

In the few pieces that don't work, the young Heighton depicts older, morally exhausted figures, and his lack of first-hand knowledge of their plight lets him down. Not so "On Strikes and Errors in Japanese Baseball". Here, the simple, imaginary juxtaposition of a Canadian teacher's relatives and those of his Japanese boss on the day Hiroshima was bombed accumulates a pathos both enormous and utterly sincere: the startling final passage has a Canadian, not a Japanese, boy see a gleaming metal fish descending from the sky. In becoming the first English press to publish this collection, Granta have landed a catch for which we should all be grateful.

A love affair with death

Paul Evans

WHAT WEATHER. After a few fine days — that tempted thrushes to launch their songs from the tree-tops and hazel catkins to shake loose from the bullet-hard buds of winter — the cold and wet returns with a vengeance. A big blustery wind sways through the trees and across the fields where groups of mixed thrush species come together. It's been dry this winter and fresh rains bring worms to the soil's surface. These will be the among the last of the thrush tribe's communal morning feeds. The fieldfares and redwings will head north in spring, back to Iceland, Scandinavia and Siberia, and the mistle thrushes will pair off in the woods.

Getting out of the wind and rain, I look through an old cabinet of butterflies collected from around the world in the 1920s and given to me when I was a child. Each draw opens into a strange and enchanting world, but a world tinged with the macabre and sinister. Like the thrushes out on the wet field, the naturalist collectors of old showed no mercy towards the beautiful lives they snatched from the wild. Unlike the thrushes the naturalist collectors *killed only to embellish* their own egos, often in the name of scientific method.

A fascinating little book by Kate Salway, called Collectors' Items (Pale Green Press, £12), examines natural history collections in the light of contemporary attitudes to nature. At first glance this book is presented like an art gallery catalogue full of photographs of beautifully coloured and carefully arranged natural history specimens and collecting equipment. But there is something uncomfortably attractive about them. Kate Salway's photos are strangely lit, the colours otherworldly and many have shadows cast across them as if the viewer were peering through a window into a place where everything is a still life. "What is still life if not a euphemism for dead?" writes Marina Benjamin. This is a book about necrology, a sort of necrophilia of naturalists.

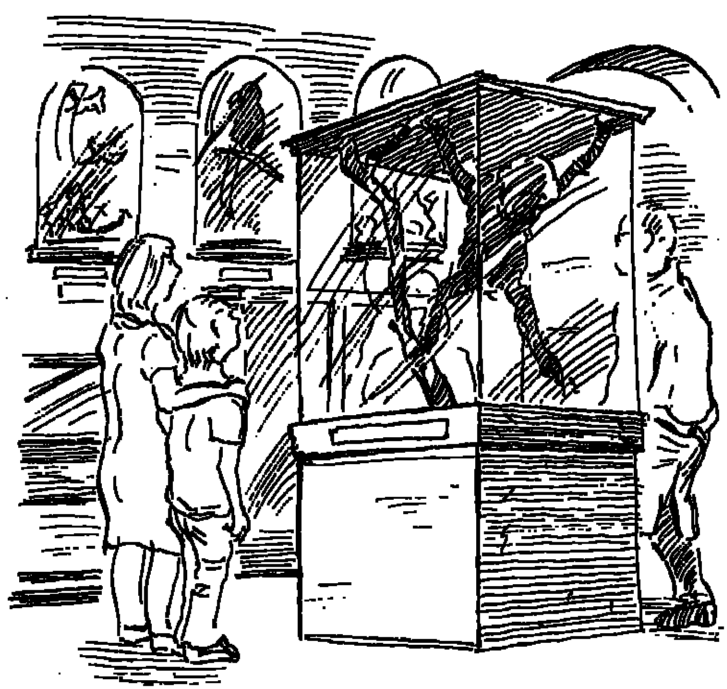


ILLUSTRATION: BARRY LARKING

The text is divided into three essays. The first is a short introduction by John Fowles whose work has inspired this book. Fowles rails against this "cruelly fascist, individual-hating and suppressing world we are 'unfairly' forced to inhabit, like a penal colony", and introduces the essays by the two women, Marina Benjamin and Kate Salway in the hope that they are, "if only symbolically, doing what mothers of children foolishly playing on cliff-edges have always done." What Benjamin and Salway attempt to pull us away from is a neurotic, obsessively acquisitive attitude towards nature.

This attitude, says Benjamin, stems from Francis Bacon's ideology of the conquest of nature which became enshrined in the aims and methods of modern experimental science. Benjamin goes further than Bill McKibben's The End Of Nature, by claiming that nature has already disappeared and has been replaced by a theme park. "What we take to be nature is the ultimate collector's fantasy, it is pickled, boxed-up and memorialised in vitro. What's more, it has every appearance of life."

If Kate Salway's photographs uphold the "appearance of life" while making us question why we find these dead things so fascinating, her words create a dark picture of our lust for dominion over nature through collections of insects, amphibians, fossils, gems, birds eggs, stuffed animals and shells. As a kid I collected beetles but had given it up to be a committed conservationist by the time I was about 14. However, there are words and images in this little book which push a pin straight through me when they remind me of collecting jars and killing fluid. Ironically, Salway falls into the same trap. Her beautiful yet disturbing photographs are the result of her own acquisitiveness. The camera too commits murder, killing what it brings in to focus.

Chess Leonard Barden

ONE ACID test of a new book on openings is to compare a newly-played game with the writer's analysis: is the book helpful, misleading or silent on the chosen variation?

Both authors this week pass the practicality test. John Nunn's The Complete Najdorf 6 Bg5 (Batsford, £17.99) is a full and clear survey of an opening favoured by Fischer and Kasparov. Nunn guides the reader through Poisoned Pawn and Polugaevsky, and surprisingly recommends the Gothenburg variation, condemned to obscurity since three Argentines were crushed by a trio of Russians. A few days before Nunn's book appeared, James Plaskett had to win in the final round of the Hastings Challengers to qualify for next year's Premier.

Plaskett v Pigott

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Bg5 e6 7 f4 Qb6 8 Qd2 Qxb2 9 Rb1 Qa3 10 f5 Nc6 11 fxe6 fxe6 12 Nxc6 bxc6 13 e5 dxe5 14 Bxf6 gxf6 15 Ne4 Be7 16 Be2 h5 17 Rb3 Qa4 18 Nxf6+ Bxf6 19 c4 Ra7 20 0-0 Rd7 21 Qe3 All this is well-known theory. Nunn now gives Rf7! as leading to a draw.

Bg7? 22 Qg5 Qa5 23 Rd3!? At last diverging from Nunn, whose 23 Rb8 Qc7 24 Bxh5+ is also good for White. **Rf7** There's no defence. If Rxd3 24 Qxg7! attacks both rooks, while 23 . . . Qc5+ 24 Kh1 Qe7 25 Qg6+ Kd8 26 Rf7! and White emerges with Q v R+B.

24 Bxh5 Rxh5 25 Qxh5 Bf6 26 Rdf3 Ke7 27 Rxf6 Rxf6 28 Qh4 Bd7 29 Qxf6+ Kd6 30 Rd1+ Kc7 31 Qe7 Resigns.

Angus Dunnington's Chigorin Queen's Gambit (Batsford, £13.99) argues for 1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6, which blocks Black's c7 pawn but prepares fast development. This defence is well worth looking at if you like off-beat systems or prefer knights to bishops; publication coincided with a Budapest event where the winner scored with an idea from the book, concluding with a double piece sacrifice.

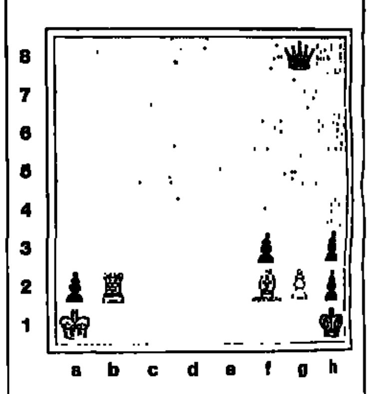
Farago v Bigaliev

1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6 3 e3 e5 4 cxd5 Qxd5 5 Nc3 Bb4 6 Bd2 Bxc3 7 bxc3 Nf6! This Morozevich discovery replaces the older exchange exd4. **8 c4 Qd6 9 d5 Ne7 10 Qb1 a5** Dunnington suggests the gambit 0-0 11 Bb4 c5 12 dxc6 Qc7, but Bigaliev has played this defence before, so his restraining 10 . . . a5 is a considered choice.

11 e4 0-0 12 Nf3?! 12 Ne2 and 13 Nc3 is more flexible. **c6!** Opening the c file proves useful later. **13 Bc3 Ng6 14 Bd3 b5 15 Nd2 Nf4 16 Bf1 cxd5 17 cxd5 Ng4 18 Qc2 Nxf2!** The Chigorin knights strike.

19 Kxf2 Qc5+ 20 Kf3 No better are 20 Ke1 Bg4! with Qe3+ or 20 Kg3 Qe3+ 21 Nf3 Nh5+ Bg4+! 21 Kxg4 Qf2 22 g3 h5+ 23 Kh4 f6 **24 Resigns.**

No 2461



White mates in three moves, against any defence. A rare case of a problem which has lived to tell the tale against computers: one strong US program chose the wrong answer, another insisted it was mate in four.

No 2460: 1 dxe5! Nd7 2 g3! The five themes: **1** WP no longer isolated; **2** g3 restricts Black Ns; **3** P on dark square in harmony with B on light; **4** Black Pn4 potentially weak; and **5** after 1 dxe5 can be attacked along the fourth rank.

Quick crossword no. 355

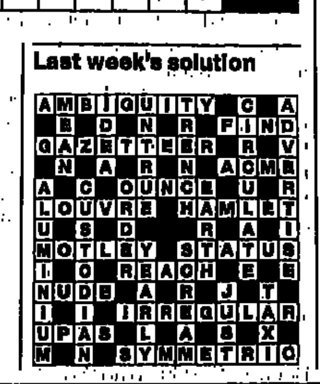
Across

1 September 29 (10)
7 The largest flatfish (7)
8 Intended (5)
10 Regretted (4)
11 One who steals cars for pleasure (8)
13 Mystery (6)
15 Candle-holder (6)
17 Painstaking (8)
18 Lent eg, not lento! (4)
21 Din (5)
22 Accuse — charge (7)
23 Five-event athletic event (10)

Down

1 Skirmish (5)
2 Block — of the third power (4)
3 Suit — the deed? (6)
4 Comic verse (8)
5 Desert (7)
6 1920s' dance (10)
9 Paint thinner (10)
12 Forward (8)
14 Adulate (7)
16 Horrified (6)
19 Foreign (5)
20 Spoken (4)

Last week's solution



Bridge Zia Mahmood

HOW LONG did the Hundred Years' War last? What nationality was the ninth century philosopher John the Scot? What colour is the black box on an aeroplane? What have any of these questions to do with a bridge column? The answers to the first three questions are, respectively, 116 years, Irish and orange. The answer to the fourth is that, just as in the first *three questions, when you are given* a bridge hand as a poser, you will know that the answer which appears obvious is not going to be the one that works. For all that, it can be worthwhile to study the reasons why the obvious answer fails — perhaps you can learn something to your advantage next time a similar position occurs at the table.

Take this hand as West; it's rubber bridge, and both sides are vulnerable:

♠A ♥KQJ963 ♦42 ♣J963

This is the bidding:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♥	2♠	4♥
4♠	?		

Would you bid five hearts? Probably not, since your hand has plenty of minor-suit losers. Partner did not make a strength-showing cue bid of three spades at his first turn, so it is likely that you will be at least a couple of tricks down in five hearts doubled. Meanwhile the opponents have not made four spades yet — what will you lead to stop them from doing so?

I'd bet that not one player in 100 *would look further than the king of* hearts. This natural lead may well hold the trick and allow us to find the best continuation after seeing dummy; even if it does not, we'll have given nothing away. Imagine my astonishment, then, when the expert player I was watching unhesitatingly led the three of clubs! See top of next column for full deal.

Declarer won the opening lead with the ten of clubs and led a trump, but West won his ace of spades and led the jack of clubs as a suit-preference signal for hearts. East ruffed and underled his ace of hearts, so West was able to give his partner another club ruff to defeat the contract.

"That was a wonderful lead!" I exclaimed.

West merely shrugged his shoulders as he proceeded to justify his

North
♠J 10 6
♥5 4
♦J 10 3
♣K Q 8 4 2

West
♠A
♥K Q J 9 6 3
♦4 2
♣J 9 6 3

East
♠9 8 7
♥A 10 8 7
♦Q 9 7 6 5
♣5

South
♠K Q 5 4 3 2
♥2
♦A K 8
♣A 10 7

choice. "You see," he explained, "I thought we had at most one heart trick, and we could wait to cash that until I was in with the ace of trumps. In the meantime, it seemed to me that we needed to establish some tricks in one of the other suits, which is why I chose a club lead, mainly in the hope that partner would have some high-card strength there. In the event, I was lucky, because he had a singleton instead — but it was just as well that I kept my heart entry to cater for that possibility!"

Lucky he may have been, but I felt that he deserved his luck for his logical reasoning.

Cricket One-day International: New Zealand v England

Tactical suicide by Germon

Paul Weaver in Auckland

ENGLISH cricket teams abroad have proved such expert marksmen in the foot-shooting department that there was something approaching empathy with Lee Germon on Sunday after the New Zealand captain, with a most notable piece of tactical maladroitness, blasted away his side's chances of winning here.

Despite the dampness in the pitch and the humidity in the air, despite — most culpably — weather forecasts predicting considerable afternoon rain, Germon decided to bat. It was suicide.

After it was over, and England had won by six wickets to take a 2-0 lead in the five-match series, Germon at least had the decency to look sheepish. "The weather ruined the match for us, and the crowd. It comes down to how much you trust the weather forecast, and today they got it right. In hindsight we would have been better bowling."

Germon is only a novice Test player so tactical bloopers may cost him dear. On Sunday, however, New Zealand were also the losers in an imbecilic application of a one-day ruling.

England, captained by Nasser Hussain because Michael Atherton had a stiff back, had made a promising start in their effort to overhaul New Zealand's 253 for eight, scoring 47 from only six overs before the rain came. The target was then adjusted to a very straightforward 132 from 26 overs.

But to make things easier the 15-over period at the start of the innings, during which only two players are allowed outside the fielding circle, was not reduced. England made 134 for four from only 19.3 overs and could scarcely refrain from sniggering at the stupidity of it all.

Nick Knight has not played particularly well in recent matches but here he led the way with a pinch-hitting 84 not out from only 69 deliveries, with 12 fours.

New Zealand were also unlucky in that play had restarted only just in time to prevent the game being scrapped in favour of an entirely new match on Monday. England had bowled so badly at the start that New Zealand's batsmen were able to triumph over the unpromising conditions. They scored 62 from the first 10 overs as first Bryan Young and then Stephen Fleming and Chris Cairns took the attack to the bowlers.

Knight . . . named Man of the Match for his 84 not out

Cairns was the pick of the batsmen, hitting 79 from 74 balls, before he was unluckily run out just before the ultimate slog. Injury prevented him from bowling but he was still worth his place.

● Thirteen proved a lucky number for England in the first one-day internationals against New Zealand at Christchurch. They beat the home side by four wickets — their first victory in 12 away one-day games against Test-playing countries. New Zealand made 222 for six but England overhauled that total for the loss of six wickets themselves with seven balls to spare. A partnership of 170 in 34 overs between Surrey colleagues Alec Stewart and Graham Thorpe was the backbone of England's reply. Phil Tufnell, playing his first one-day international for two years, took four wickets for 22 runs and won the Man of the Match award.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Six go on trial over Ayrton Senna's death

THE TRIAL has opened in Italy of six people, including Frank Williams, founder and managing director of Williams Grand Prix Engineering, over the death of Ayrton Senna. The Brazilian racing driver, a former world champion, died when his car hurtled off the track on the seventh lap of the San Marino Grand Prix at Imola on Sunday, May 1, 1994.

The six were ordered to appear to answer charges of manslaughter in connection with the crash, which has been the subject of considerable speculation and controversy. A court official last week read out a list of 14 witnesses the prosecution intends to call, among them current world champion Damon Hill, Senna's team-mate at the time of the crash. The trial is expected to last several months.

BRITISH soccer's love affair with European players shows no sign of slackening. Many clubs in the Premiership now boast of two or even three Continentals in their team. Now comes the news that Tottenham Hotspur have launched an £8 million bid to lure Pierluigi Casiraghi to White Hart Lane. Lazio claim Spurs have asked them to name their price for the 28-year-old who was part of the Italian team that defeated England in last month's World Cup qualifier at Wembley.

Celtic, meanwhile, have made Enrico Annoni, the 30-year-old defender from Roma, one of their own, and Rangers have signed Tony Vidmar. Although Vidmar is an Australian international, his Italian passport grants him European Union status and means he does not need a work permit to play in Scotland.

In another move, the 17-year-old Paris St Germain striker Nicolas Anelka will join Arsenal immediately instead of having to wait until the summer when his contract with PSG runs out. Arsenal are believed to have agreed to pay the French club a "confidential sum" to bring the move forward.

THE Australian all-rounder Sean Young is to replace Courtney Walsh as Gloucestershire's overseas player this summer. The West Indian captain's busy schedule means that he will be unable to attend to his county duties until late June. The 26-year-old Young comes on the recommendation of Terry Alderman, who also had a season with Gloucestershire.

VA'AIGA TUIGAMALA, the 27-year-old Western Samoan widely regarded as the world's most powerful three-quarter, became rugby's first £1 million player when he returned from Rugby League to Union after signing a five-year deal with Newcastle Falcons. It is by some distance the most lucrative move in the code's 18-month professional history, and at a stroke doubles the former All Black's salary.

IN the last of Rugby Union's Pilkington Cup quarter-finals, Harlequins beat Saracens 28-21 in the all-London tie. Will Carling scored two second-half tries to end Saracens' lingering hopes of a fightback. In the semi-finals Harlequins will meet Sale, while Gloucester will take on Leicester.

CAPE TOWN'S bid to become the first African nation to host the summer Olympic Games, in 2004, has suffered a major setback due to the city's rampant crime problem, according to the International Olympic Committee's evaluation report. Athens and Rome are now front-runners to stage the event.

BRITAIN'S Johnny Nelson came as a late replacement for unwell Terry Dunstan and won the European cruiserweight title by stopping Frenchman Patrice Aouissi in the seventh round at Berck-sur-Mer.

PRESTON North End, one of the 12 founder members of the Football League in 1888, are to house the National Football Museum after the Heritage Lottery Fund agreed to provide a grant of £5.7 million. The museum is expected to open next year. The biggest amount of lottery money to be given to a sports project so far went to an ice rink in Nottingham with a grant of £22.5 million.

Tennis

Henman fails his final test

Richard Jago

TIM HENMAN probably listened with relief when Marc Rosset whispered to him during the Swiss national anthem that he could hardly lift the jewel-encrusted racket he won for beating the British champion 6-2, 7-5, 6-4 in the final of the European Community Championships. It was one of the few times during the afternoon that Henman could be certain Rosset would not smack something past him.

On the rare occasions when an off-form Henman struggled into a position to do damage, the former Olympic champion often heaved down an unreturnable serve. He did so four times in a row when Henman had him at 15-40 in the middle of the second set.

He did so again at 30-40 when Henman made a brave attempt to break back to 6-6 with some gambler's approaches to the net. He did it once more to consolidate his break and go 5-3 up in the final set, and finished the match off with yet another ace.

Henman must have been more disappointed about his own performance, the worst in his three finals on the ATP tour this season. He may have been nervous and his serve certainly did not work properly. He was in the match only during the *second set.*

Nevertheless Henman is on a finalists' list that, among several other famous names, features John McEnroe's. He is climbing towards the highest company: the $85,000 second prize was his biggest ATP pay day and he reached his biggest final without at any stage producing his best.

Above all, reaching the final improved the British No1's ranking in world tennis from 19th to 14th.

"This final hurts more than the one in Doha," Henman said. "There were not many plus points from it. But the week was a positive experience because I learned something about winning without being at my best. But I take my hat off to him. His serve is as good as anyone's."

Football results and league tables

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP Arsenal 0, Wimbledon 1; Chelsea 1, Man Utd 1; Coventry 0, Everton 0; Leicester 4 Derby Co 2; Liverpool 0, Blackburn 0, Middlesbro 0, Newcastle 1; Nottm For 0, Aston Villa 0; Southmptn 2, Sheff Wed 3; Sunderlnd 0, Leeds 1; West Ham 4, Tottenham 3.

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE First Division Barnsley 1, Wolves; Birmingham 1 Port Vale 2; Charlton 4, Norwich 4; C Palace 0, Tranmere 1; Huddersfld 1, Bolton 2; Ipswich 2, Oxford 1; Oldham 1, Bradford 2; Reading 3, Southend 2, Sheff Utd 3, Grimsby 1; Stoke 0, QPR 0, WBA 0, Portsmth 2; Man City 3, Swindon 0.

Second Division Blackpool 2, Stockport 1, Brentford 1, Bournemth 0, Bristol City 3, Crewe 0; Burnley 2, Bristol R 2; Bury 2, Notts Co 0, Chesterfld 1, Plymouth 2, Gillingham 2, Peterboro 1, Luton 5, Preston 1, Rotherham 0, Wrexham 0, Shrewsbry 1, Millwall 1, Walsall 1, York 1, Wycombe 0, Watford 0.

Third Division Barnet 2, Fulham 2; Brighton 3, Swansea 2; Cardiff 2, Hartlepool 0; Chester 1, Mansfield 0; Exeter 3, Darlington 2; Lincoln 3, Hereford 3; Northmptn 2, Doncaster 0; Scarboro 2, Rochdale 2; Sc'thorpe 2, Colchester 1; Torquay 1, Hull; Wigan 5, Leyton O 1.

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE Premier Division Dunfrmline 3, Aberdeen 0, Hearts 3, Raith 2; Kilmarnk 2, Dundee U 3; Motherwell 0, Celtic 1; Rangers 3 Hibernian 1

First Division Airdrie 1, East Fife 1; Dundee 1, Morton 0; Falkirk 2, Partick 1, St Mirren 2, St Johnstn 1.

Second Division Berwick 1 Stenhsmr 0, Brechin 1, Ayr 1, Hamilton 4, Clyde 0, Queen Sth 4, Dumbarton 0

Third Division
Alloa 0, Arbroath 2; Inverness 1, Forfar 1

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	27	15	9	3	53	20	54
Liverpool	27	15	8	4	40	20	53
Newcastle	26	14	6	6	51	30	48
Arsenal	26	13	9	4	45	26	48
Aston Villa	27	12	7	8	34	26	43
Wimbledon	24	12	6	6	37	29	42
Chelsea	25	11	9	5	39	34	42
Sheff Wed	26	9	12	5	31	31	39
Leeds	27	9	6	12	22	31	33
Everton	26	8	8	10	34	38	32
Tottenham	26	9	5	12	30	37	32
Leicester	25	8	6	11	29	37	30
Derby	27	6	11	10	27	36	29
Sunderland	26	7	8	11	23	33	29
Blackburn	25	6	10	9	28	25	28
Coventry	27	6	10	11	24	35	28
West Ham	26	6	7	13	24	36	25
Nottm Forest	26	5	9	12	23	40	24
Southampton	24	5	5	14	34	44	20
Middlesbrough*	25	5	7	13	30	45	19

* Three pts deducted

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE First Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bolton	34	19	11	4	71	45	68
Wolverhampton	33	17	7	9	47	32	58
Barnsley	32	15	10	7	54	40	55
Sheff Utd	33	15	9	9	57	39	54
Norwich	33	14	8	11	50	52	50
Crystal Palace	32	13	10	9	59	34	49
Ipswich	33	12	12	9	47	42	48
Portsmouth	33	14	6	13	40	37	48
Port Vale	34	11	14	9	42	39	47
Stoke	32	13	8	11	40	43	47
Tranmere	32	13	7	12	44	42	46
QPR	33	11	11	11	44	45	44
Oxford Utd	33	12	7	14	46	43	43
Swindon	33	12	6	15	45	45	42
West Brom	34	9	14	11	54	60	41
Huddersfield	34	10	11	13	40	48	41
Reading	32	10	10	12	43	50	40
Charlton	32	11	7	14	39	47	40
Man City	31	11	5	15	39	43	38
Birmingham	30	9	10	11	33	35	37
Bradford	33	8	10	15	32	50	34
Southend	33	7	11	15	32	59	32
Grimsby	32	7	10	15	41	58	31
Oldham	31	6	10	15	32	43	28

Second Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brentford	31	16	11	4	49	29	59
Luton	30	16	7	7	54	33	55
Bristol City	32	14	9	9	52	34	51
Bury	29	14	9	6	43	28	51
Crewe	31	16	2	13	42	38	50
Stockport	30	13	9	8	43	34	48
Millwall	32	13	9	10	41	41	48
Burnley	33	13	8	12	47	38	47
Chesterfield	30	13	8	9	27	23	47
Walsall	31	13	7	11	37	33	46
Wrexham	29	11	13	5	36	31	46
Watford	29	10	16	3	28	21	46
Blackpool	31	10	12	9	40	33	42
Bournemouth	35	11	9	15	31	37	42
Gillingham	32	11	8	13	37	42	41
Shrewsbury	33	10	10	13	43	52	40
Plymouth	32	9	12	11	37	45	39
Preston	33	11	6	16	33	43	39
Bristol Rovers	32	9	11	12	34	36	38
York	32	9	7	16	33	51	34
Peterborough	32	7	11	14	44	55	32
Wycombe	31	8	7	16	29	43	31
Notts County	32	5	10	17	23	42	25
Rotherham	32	4	11	17	26	48	23

Third Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Carlisle	32	19	8	5	49	21	65
Fulham	34	19	7	8	58	34	64
Wigan	32	19	6	7	60	37	63
Swansea	33	16	6	11	46	40	54
Cambridge Utd	33	16	6	11	44	47	54
Colchester	34	12	16	6	44	36	52
Chester	33	14	10	9	39	31	52
Northampton	32	14	8	11	50	35	50
Cardiff	33	15	5	13	42	40	50
Scarborough	34	12	13	9	48	45	49
Lincoln	34	12	10	12	49	55	46
Mansfield	34	11	13	10	37	34	46
Hull	33	10	14	9	31	34	44
Torquay	33	12	7	14	34	37	43
Scunthorpe	32	12	5	15	45	50	41
Leyton Orient	35	10	11	14	32	34	41
Rochdale	33	8	15	10	38	41	39
Barnet	32	8	14	10	32	33	38
Hartlepool	34	10	7	17	37	51	37
Hereford	35	9	9	17	39	52	36
Exeter	34	9	8	17	32	48	35
Darlington	33	9	7	17	47	61	34
Doncaster	33	8	6	19	34	57	30
Brighton*	34	8	7	19	39	55	29

* Two pts deducted

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE Premier Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	27	21	4	2	69	22	67
Celtic	27	19	3	5	64	25	60
Dundee Utd	27	13	7	7	37	23	46
Hearts	28	11	8	9	40	37	41
Aberdeen	28	9	9	10	38	44	36
Dunfermline	27	10	5	12	41	51	35
Motherwell	28	7	7	14	33	49	28
Hibernian	27	6	7	14	27	46	25
Kilmarnock	27	7	3	17	31	63	24
Raith	28	5	5	18	24	54	20

First Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
St Johnstone	27	17	6	4	58	19	57
Dundee	27	13	8	6	38	24	47
St Mirren	27	13	6	8	39	33	45
Partick	27	10	11	6	42	29	41
Airdrie	26	9	13	4	39	27	40
Falkirk	25	10	7	8	25	23	37
Gr Morton	26	9	6	11	30	28	33
Stirling	27	7	7	13	35	49	28
Clydebank	27	6	6	15	23	41	24
East Fife	27	1	6	20	16	74	9

Second Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ayr	26	18	4	4	46	25	58
Livingston	25	14	8	3	42	24	50
Hamilton	24	14	5	5	54	23	47
Clyde	25	9	8	8	29	29	35
Stenhousemuir	26	9	7	10	35	27	34
Queen of South	26	8	6	12	40	49	30
Stranraer	25	7	7	11	23	33	28
Brechin	24	6	10	9	26	32	28
Dumbarton	25	6	6	14	28	50	21
Berwick	26	3	7	16	26	57	16

Third Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Inverness CT	25	16	6	3	49	25	54
Forfar	25	12	7	6	49	31	43
Ross County	25	13	4	8	41	33	43
Montrose	26	12	3	11	38	42	39
Alloa	23	10	6	8	33	33	36
Albion	26	9	8	8	32	32	35
Cowdenbeath	26	8	5	13	29	34	29
Queen's Park	25	6	8	11	33	39	26
Arbroath	25	5	8	12	21	35	23
East Stirling	25	4	6	15	26	46	18